LUCILE AND HER FRIENDS

ILLUSTRATED

By
HATTIE
TYNG
GRISWOLD

Della Mae Ritter
May 15, 1958
Little House

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"SHAKE HANDS ON IT, THEN," SAID MR. RAY.

—*Page 42.*

LUCILE AND HER FRIENDS

A STORY FOR GIRLS

BY

HATTIE TYNG GRISWOLD

AUTHOR OF

"HOME LIFE OF GREAT AUTHORS," "APPLE BLOSSOMS," "FATE AND FAITH,"
"WAITING ON DESTINY."

With Illustrations by True Williams

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

"SHAKE HANDS ON IT, THEN," SAID MR. RAY.....*Frontispiece.*

"ELINOR NEVER ONCE MOVED. SHE WAS AFRAID OF BREAKING THE SPELL." 21

'IN ONE OF THE TENTS SITS A YOUNG MAN, WRITING."..... 77

"ISABEL KEPT HERSELF AT THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE ROOM."..... 95

"AND THOUGHT ABOUT THE WRITER—FAR AWAY."..... 111

"BEGIN BY LEAVING ALL YOUR OLD COMPANIONS—THEY ARE BAD."..... 133

"THEN THE PLAYER AROSE. ELINOR DID NOT MOVE."..... 153

"LUCILE RAN SWIFTLY AND KNELT DOWN BY HER FATHER."..... 171

'TELL ME HOW I PREACHED THIS MORNING, MISS ISABEL."..... 193

"ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ASK ME TO COME BACK?"..... 201

"OH, FRANK! HOW GOOD OF YOU TO COME."..... 211

"THE COUNTRY SCENES RECALLED HER HAPPY GIRLHOOD."..... 223

LUCILE AND HER FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

"Strange is it that our bloods,
Of color, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty."—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

"YOU ought to write a poem on such a mournful occasion, Lucile. Don't you begin to feel inspired?"

It was Gertrude Dana who thus addressed Lucile Layton, as four young ladies stood together in the parlor of Miss Weston's school, in Chicago, just before separating to go to their homes.

"Not I, indeed. My mournful verses are always written when I am in the best of spirits; and when I feel as heart-broken as at this instant, I usually indite a rollicking song."

"How dreadful to think we shall not come back next term," said Isabel Logan, almost in tears, while Elinor Lewis answered:

"Oh, I am glad of it. I've had enough of school, Miss Weston and all, and want to try a free breath once more. This keeping of hours is perfect slavery. I'll have no more of it, but sit up all night whenever I take a notion, and make no possible pretense of getting up by day. What freedom! won't it be glorious? Choir, please sing 'Hallelujah, 'tis done.'"

"Oh, Elinor, how can you be so glad? Won't you want to see us all, a single bit?" said Lucile Layton, with a pathetic little half smile.

"Yes, indeed, and sha'nt have anything else to do now. You don't live in Alaska, fortunately, and if I ever do conclude to get up in the morning, I'll drop in on you, without money and without price."

"But it will be hard for all four of us to meet often," answered Lucile, still sadly.

"Not a bit of it; don't St. Paul say, 'Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together,' or something of that sort?"

"Was it St. Paul?"

"Well, if it wasn't, it was some equally respectable party, and you girls want to see to it that the command is obeyed. We don't want to turn into fossil remains at once. We are just ready to live, now."

"You may be, Elinor, but I feel as if I was past my usefulness, now," said Lucile, "with no more essays or orations to write for you girls. 'Othello's occupation's gone.'"

"You'll probably become a female reporter, and go about interviewing people. Interview me. I'd interview beautifully, I'm sure. I feel as though born for it; ask my views of the tariff, at once. I'm loaded with information. Wrote it up last week, and am in possession of all the knowledge there is."

"I suppose I may come to even that. I can do nothing but scribble, and, as you are aware, I am not rolling in wealth, at present, so I suppose I shall write for the papers,—poetry they won't pay for except in compliments, stories I'm afraid I can't do, so I shall probably end by writing up the fashions or interviewing my friends as you suggest. I'd rather rob a bank, but

that wouldn't be pretty, and I suppose I shall have to stick to the respectabilities to the last gasp, as I am a woman."

"Go on the stage and give dramatic readings, that's all the go now, and you know how Miss Weston used to show off your hand-washing scene in Lady Macbeth."

"Angels and ministers of grace, defend us. Before I'd go about the country doing elocution for a living, I'd wrap the drapery of my couch about me and lie down to pleasant dreams —under the daisies."

"Wouldn't you like to be Ellen Terry?"

"Yes, indeed. I'd be a grand actress if I could, but none of your gifted barn-stormers."

"Write a tragedy—you look like the tragic muse just now."

"And feel it, too. I hate to go home and lose you girls. You're all I've got. It's different with the rest of you, but I shall just sink in the 'depths of divine despair' in thinking of the days that are no more."

The three girls all clasped their arms around the petite figure, and kissed her in turn.

"The idea that you'll lose us! Why, we shall just see you all the more. How could we ever get along without you—you're the spice of our lives! You're a relish—good as olives or salted almonds. You can't escape your destiny. We are going to keep you for a *sauce piquant, ma belle,*" cried Elinor Lewis, while the others echoed, "Indeed we are, *ma belle.*"

The gray, near-sighted eyes filled with tears, and she wiped her eye-glasses as she answered, "Oh, I know how good you are, but you can't be with me much, and I shall perish of heart-hunger and longing for you all—I know it. But I'll make a fight for life, and probably take all your lives for the society papers—at five dollars apiece."

"You may even do that, without fear of assassination, though no other mortal could," cried Elinor. "We'll even have pictures taken, for wood-cuts, to illustrate your article, if you say so, and I'm sure no friendship but ours would stand that test."

"What will you do with yourself now, Isabel?" asked Gertrude, turning to the most quiet member of the group, with affectionate interest.

"I really do not know. Father will not let me study medicine, go to a training school for nurses, or even teach school, as I want to, and there never was a person more unfitted for the life of a young society lady, I am sure. Imagine me dancing and flirting, and attending an unending line of afternoon receptions. I'd rather be a dog and bay at the moon than such a woman."

"But you might travel, Isabel."

"That would do for a time, but I've no liking for it. I've always noticed that those people who have travelled the farthest know the least—that their knowledge is in inverse ratio to the space they've spanned, and I wouldn't really care if I never went outside Cook County. Lake Geneva's in that county, isn't it? That's the only place I ever care to visit. You can see all there is of nature at Lake Geneva—and I prefer people to landscapes, any time."

"Oh, Isabel," said Lucile, "if I had your chance I'd put a girdle round the earth before I ever stopped. I want to see the whole earth, every nook and cranny, and the isles of the sea, and then other worlds, too. I'm insatiable."

"Shows the perversity of fate. You are the right woman in the wrong place. A little doll like you, and a poet at that, must earn her own living, while a strong-minded and fiercely-aggressive female of my size is sternly forbidden by a cruel parent to do any useful work in the world. Don't I look as if

I was made for amusement?" and she straightened herself up and looked as fierce as her size would allow, for Isabel was not of gigantic stature any more than was Lucile; and, like her, wore eye-glasses for near-sightedness.

They were rather a striking group as they stood together thus. Gertrude Dana was a very tall brunette, exceedingly slender, erect, and with a carriage so noble that it distinguished her wherever she went. Her complexion was clear and pale and not very dark, and she usually had quite a dash of color in her cheeks. Her dark-brown hair was very heavy and long, growing quite low on a forehead broad but not high, and slightly waving there. The features were good—the nose a little on the Roman order but not prominent, the mouth sweet and small, the teeth perfect, and the eyes very large, dark and tender, with extremely long lashes. She was very beautiful and without a particle of vanity—a thing so unusual that it distinguished her wherever she was known. She was rather thin and immature now, but gave royal promise for the future.

Elinor Lewis was as complete a contrast as though she had been formed for that express purpose. Not quite as tall as Gertrude, and yet a tall girl, with exceedingly fine figure; she was the most pronounced of blondes. Her complexion was very fair, but she, too, had color usually; her eyes were of the very palest blue imaginable, but fine and expressive, and her hair so flaxen that it was almost white. She was called beautiful by those who were fond of that type, but often spoken of as singular-looking, by others. She had a rarely sweet smile, and was very graceful in her movements.

Isabel Logan was rather below the medium height, had a face full of intelligence and not unpleasing in feature or in coloring, which was rather of the blonde order, a little inclined to

be sandy, but not of a pronounced type. She had dark blue eyes, usually covered by glasses, and the daintiest of hands and feet.

Lucile Layton was small, but perfectly formed, had a clear, pale face with no color at any time, large, dark-gray eyes, also near-sighted, with long curling lashes, and an abundance of chestnut-brown hair, with almost an auburn glint in it when the sunlight touched it. She had a wistful, appealing sort of air, almost child-like, which made every one feel like protecting her at all times, though she was far from being a weak or childish person, being rather of a strong and pronounced individuality.

They were not an ordinary group of school girls either in look or character, but the picked four of this large school, and a four it would be hard to duplicate in any set of school girls in the land.

"And what will you do now, Gertrude?" said Lucile, after the pause, when each one had seemed busy with her own thoughts. "Don't you feel as if you had come to the 'Parting of the Ways?'"

"Yes, indeed I do, as if the former things had passed away, and I was not at all ready or willing to undertake the new. I'd like to stay here indefinitely with you girls, and let the old world take care of itself outside. But my course is laid out clearly enough for me. I've no choice, but must stay where I have been placed. You know my father is getting old, and my mother is very delicate. I shall have my work all ready to my hand, to stay with them, and make it as easy and pleasant as I can for them. No outside career would be possible for me, even if I had a taste for it, which I don't think I have."

"You'll be a household saint, a Santa Filomena, won't you?" said Lucile. "I'll get you illustrated for my article, with a lamp in your hand, and this verse inscribed beneath:

'The lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great records of that land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.'"

"Gertrude will be that, you may be sure," said Elinor, warmly. "I wish I had as much hopes of myself. I, too, have my home duties, which will be exacting, and not to be escaped from, but I don't feel half so sure I shall do them heroically and patiently. I am wild to go abroad and study music, and it seems to be the one thing impossible. So I fear I shall fret and fume in secret, though of course I mean to be very dutiful and sweet-tempered about it all."

"It is a pity you can't go to Europe, Elinor; with the start you have you could accomplish so much, if you had the chance," said Gertrude, "but 'that is best which lieth nearest; shape from it thy work of art,' as Miss Weston quoted yesterday."

"That may be good poetry, but it is false fact, in regard to music, we all know. I can't do at home what I might do abroad, but I'll do what I can. One can never be satisfied in music, but I'll get what pleasure I can from it, and not hope to excel."

"Then it seems that none of us will be away at present. That is divine, at least," Lucile said, sighing.

"And we'll have one afternoon in every week to gather ourselves together from the four quarters of the earth, and get acquainted with each other," said Isabel. "I feel that I hardly know you girls yet, though I have seen you every day for four years. You have depths I have not sounded, I am sure."

"But you do know how many caramels we can eat."

"Yes; and how dreadfully you hate to get up in the morning."

"And to go to bed at night."

"Perfectly, but beyond that, I feel that there are depths—"

"Of selfishness and trivialty you have not sounded. You are right. Not one of my friends knows what a contemptible little creature I am. I feel guilty at the thought, but I hope they'll never find me out, all the same," said Lucile.

"I hope not, indeed. I don't think we could stand much more," cried Isabel, clasping her arms about her friend, and half crying, though she laughed.

"But I am superlatively selfish. I will own it, though I hope you won't believe it. You can't imagine how I hate to go home, and help mother with the children, and do the drudgery I ought to do there. I'd rather suffer the tortures of the Inquisition, I think. They wouldn't last long, but this sort of work I dread will go on forever."

"Now, that's a long time, dearest, and I hope you'll be rescued before it's half up. The fated fairy prince will be along before you fairly know it, I am sure."

"I wish I was half so hopeful. I don't see any signs of him, but I should hail his coming with loud and long-continued applause, all the same."

"To fancy Lucile being married!" cried Gertrude. "Why, she is only seventeen; how very ridiculous."

"Oh, I don't want to be married," cried that young lady. "I can't think of anything half so odious. I'd rather do the second work and tend the children. But I am not contented. I wish some one would adopt me. I would adopt beautifully, I am sure, if the gentleman wasn't too old and was rich enough, and agreeable. I should prove a perfect treasure as a ward, I am sure. Can't such a person be found? I believe I'll advertise."

"You can't run away from trouble, my dear," said Gertrude, softly, "and especially not by running away from Duty."

"But you'll admit that Duty is a very disagreeable old maid, won't you, dear?" pouted Lucile, "I hate her and I can't help it."

"No, you do not, little sister," bravely answered Gertrude, "and you must not say things you do not mean, even to those who know you so well," and she kissed her on the cheek.

CHAPTER II.

"What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide."—*Henry VI., Part 3.*

"WHO is playing, Laura?"

"Oh, that is our little pianist, Herr Hardige."

"And who may Herr Hardige be?" and Elinor Lewis, who was calling on a friend, leaned back in a chair and closed her eyes to listen.

"Why, Belle's music teacher, of course," answered Mrs. Lawrence, indifferently.

"Belle's music teacher, indeed! Why, the child does nothing but scales, and this man is a pianist—a prodigy. Haven't you knowledge enough of music, Laura, to know that an artist is playing the 'Sonata Pathetique' in the next room?"

Elinor's face was fairly wrapped in exquisite enjoyment, but Mrs. Lawrence answered, still indifferently, "Don't know one note from another."

"Neither does Belle, and she never will—such a master wickedly wastes his time on her."

"Better tell him so, and take your own lessons from him. He doesn't charge half as much as Petrowski."

Elinor said nothing but leaned back and listened. Finally she said, "Who does he play to, that child?"

"To himself, I fancy, because he likes the piano. He looks with a royal air of scorn at me whenever I ask him to play a

galop, or a march, or anything that has any music in it. But he'll go on with that sort of thing for hours when nobody is near. No wonder, for the old piano he has in his room, John says, will hardly hold together, and ours —"

"He shall know he has a listener to-day who will not ask him for a galop or a waltz. Take me in, I must see him—he is marvelous."

"But Elinor, you don't know what sort of a person Herr Hardige is—not one you would want to know."

"You are mistaken, I have never heard of any one I so wanted to know. Such genius is not common, in Chicago at least."

Mrs. Lawrence laughed and led the way into the music-room, where Belle had taken her lesson, and from which she had fled the moment it was over, leaving Herr Hardige to the sole enjoyment of his own music. He did not hear the door open, but kept on with the grand music he was rendering. They stood still at a signal from Elinor until he had finished the piece, and partly turned round on the music-stool.

"Let me introduce you to my friend Miss Lewis, Herr Hardige, who has been enjoying your music."

He turned a pale, sad face upon them and bowed.

"Indeed I have been enjoying it—it was heavenly," said Elinor, warmly.

He looked much astonished at finding any one in this house who would even affect enthusiasm for music. Mrs. Lawrence understood the look, and exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Lewis is not like the rest of us. She will talk music with you, or to you, until even you will be tired out and beg her to change the subject."

"Miss Lewis might talk less to her advantage than upon music, madam."

"Oh, I dare say. But do entertain her awhile with some of your grand airs—for to tell the truth, Elinor, I must run to the nursery this minute. You'll excuse me."

Herr Hardige made no move to do as he had been requested, but looked gravely at Elinor, who still stood. She crossed over to him and said, "Indeed I do enjoy music, but I have feasted on yours already and I have no right to ask you to stay and entertain me. Many thanks for what I have heard. You play like a master—you should not spend your time in teaching children. You could teach artists."

"Madam is very kind, but I am glad to get even the children in Chicago. In Leipsic one teaches musicians—sometimes," he added, with a faint smile.

"Is your home in Leipsic, then?"

"When I had a home it was in Leipsic," still smiling, but sadly. He said no more, but turned to the piano and began to play. Elinor seated herself near him, and scanned his face as he played. It was a finely-cut face, thin and pale, with no trace of German heaviness in it. The eyes were very dark and very deep-set and mournful, the hair long, soft and wavy, and very dark. The hands were as delicate and white as a lady's. His attire was fastidiously neat, but marks of time were upon it. His face grew absorbed, soft, impassioned as he played. He was unconscious of having a listener, but played on and on, passing from one thing to another without pause, until the shades of twilight gathered around them, and then he played on in the increasing darkness. Elinor never once moved. She was afraid of breaking the spell. She was aware that she had never heard such music. She doubted if she should ever hear such again. Twice Mrs. Lawrence had come to the door and had been warned back with an uplifted hand.

"ELINOR NEVER ONCE MOVED. SHE WAS AFRAID OF BREAKING THE SPELL."

Finally he drew his hand across his eyes and arose from the piano. Then he became conscious of his listener. "I beg your pardon, Miss Lewis, I have been in Leipsic."

"And I, too. It was an enchanting journey. I wish we might always go as easily."

"And you really like my music? Fine ladies do not much like it — every day."

"Your music makes me divinely happy. You must play for me again. You must teach me."

"I will play for you every day. Where shall I find you?"

"And you will teach me?"

"I will see if you can learn. If not, I will not teach you."

"But you teach Belle."

"I teach all stupids, but it is for money."

"Well, you would teach me for money, of course," said Elinor, rather haughtily.

"No, I could not, I believe, teach you for money — not unless you have the soul for it. But I will play for you. At least you have the soul for that. You are the first I have played to in America who has the soul."

"I thank you. It is a very beautiful compliment, the finest, I think, I have ever had, to have the soul for such music as yours." She smiled and half involuntarily put out her hand to help him with his cloak, for when he stepped she saw he was lame— had a club foot. He saw her look of pity and his face clouded like an angry storm.

"You shall not pity me," he almost hissed. "I will not be pitied."

"I beg your pardon, Herr Hardige. I was surprised, but you have no need of pity. I envy you, instead, with all my heart."

"My foot, perhaps," with a bitter sneer.

"No; your hands and your brain; not your temper, perhaps," smiling as she arose to leave the room.

"You should not; it is infernal, or I should not treat harshly one who likes my good music." He bowed and left the room.

"You will have to stay to supper now, Elinor, and Mr. Lawrence will go around with you," said Mrs. Lawrence, as Elinor appeared in the library.

"Yes, I think I shall, but I shall find it hard to get back to earth—I have been in the clouds so long."

"And so you like our little pianist?" Mr. Lawrence said at supper.

"I like your little pianist's music very much indeed. Whether I like him is another question. He evidently has temper and pride to such a degree that he is decidedly uncomfortable to get on with."

"Yes," laughed Mr. Lawrence. "You should see him annihilate Laura with a look, when she talks to him about music. I'd give a good deal to learn that look. It would be invaluable in the family."

"Well, Laura would exasperate any musician. All she wants is a jingle, you know. I don't blame Herr Hardige for not playing Laura's music, but I do blame him for teaching Belle."

"Oh, he was uncommonly glad to teach Belle, or anybody else, when I first found him. The fellow was half starved in his garret, I think—a perfect stranger in Chicago and without a dollar. I stumbled upon him one day when Carl Robbins and I were looking over the building, and Carl heard him playing on the most broken-down old instrument you ever heard of, and began raving just as you do. We interviewed him and Carl got him some scholars. Belle was his first."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lawrence, "and I was terribly afraid to have such a Bohemian come into the house, especially to teach Belle, but Carl insisted that a fellow who played like that was all right, any way."

"Carl showed his usual discrimination. Any one can see he is a gentleman, and any one with ears would know that he is a genius," said Elinor, smiling.

"Will you really take lessons of him yourself, Elinor?"

"He expressed some unwillingness to take me."

"How impudent."

"Not at all. It was rather complimentary as he put it."

When Mr. Lawrence was walking home with Elinor he referred to it again. "What will your father say to your new scheme for lessons, Elinor?"

"He allows me to manage that matter for myself."

"But he is very particular whose acquaintance you make."

"As friends, yes. But as a teacher, as a musician, the little pianist will be unobjectionable, I think."

"But his pride?"

"Will make him see the distinction I think, and be very careful to maintain it."

After about a week he called at Elinor's home, and was received quite graciously. "You were a long time coming," she said.

"You thought I would come eagerly—next day?"

"Perhaps, if you were not too busy."

"I was not too busy. I wanted to come very much, but would not."

"Why, pray; will you tell me?"

"I hated myself for wanting to come, and spited myself by staying."

"Why?"

"Well, I must say, though I don't know why I tell you, that I saw many ladies in my own country who treated me as an artist should be treated. I have seen no ladies in this country. The women I hate. You were like the ladies I have left — ever of whom I dream — and I was angry at myself to be so much pleased that you should treat me as I deserve to be treated."

"There is certainly no merit in treating you like a gentleman," she said, rather coldly, "but please do not spite yourself in that way again."

"I cannot tell. May be I will never come again. We shall see."

"If you teach me you will have to come."

"I will teach you if you can play. Show me."

She seated herself at the piano and played Gottschalk's "Last Hope."

"I will teach you. You do not play well, but there is some hope of you." So she had a first lesson then and there, and he came regularly thereafter.

CHAPTER III.

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel,
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade."—*Hamlet.*

LUCILE LAYTON lived in an uncongenial home, and made small pretense of being contented there. The father, naturally a man of some brilliancy and force of character, but born in a humble sphere and having few advantages in youth, had, like most men of his class, always been addicted to the drink habit, and, though for many years it did not seriously interfere with his care for his family, it had now come to do so to a great extent, and every year saw it a little more difficult for the family to live in comfort—even in respectability. The mother was an amiable but weak woman, who ruined her children by indulgence, and laid up for herself a great store of trouble; and was, in consequence of this weakness of will and excess of amiability, small restraint upon her husband, who despised her, and even upon Lucile, who loved, pitied, but hardly respected her. Their home was comfortless, the family fortunes low, and the brilliant young daughter ambitious, but discouraged. She had managed to make her way through Miss Weston's school, and had really been one of the stars there; but it had cost her heavily, in wounded pride and in self-repression, and had not been by any means easy as a mere financial undertaking. She had very considerable talent as a writer, and enter-

tained high hopes of success in her chosen field, but as yet her successes had been few, outside of school work, in which she had won many laurels. She had also made valuable friends there.

The group of girls we have described, all from good families and some of them wealthy, had made her one of themselves purely on the ground of intellectual equality, as they and she thought, but really largely out of a sympathy called forth by her childish, appealing manner, and her perfect frankness in relating the bad fortunes of her family. She was very unhappy at home and always glad to escape to the more congenial firesides of her friends, and had spent much time at those homes, and was on quite an intimate footing in all.

A short time after the close of school we find her spending the day with Gertrude Dana, at her delightful semi-suburban home. Gertrude was the only daughter and had come to the close of her school days when quite young, as her mother did not feel she could spare her longer, and now she was the constant companion and attendant upon that mother, a charming and lovely woman, whom the daughter worshiped with all devotion. There was one son, several years older than Gertrude, who also lived at home and did business with his father as a banker in the city. This was Francis Dana, a young man well known in business and social circles, and the pride and glory of the home, a gay, charming fellow, full of intelligence and vivacity, who adored his sister and danced attendance upon all her friends.

"I hope Frank can take us to the parks this afternoon," said Gertrude, soon after Lucile arrived, "it has been so stormy I have scarcely had an afternoon's drive this week, and now it is heavenly weather because you have come. Won't it be delightful?"

"It is always delightful to me to roll in my carriage," said Lucile's mocking voice, "especially when other people are trudging by on foot. I never thought I should be like Lord Burleigh's wife, crushed 'under the burden of an honor into which I was not born.' If I ever had the good fortune to get transplanted into a larger kingdom I think I should be to the manor born, especially in the line of spending money," she laughed.

"Are you still as recklessly extravagant as you have always been?"

"Yes, indeed. Whenever I get a cent of money I think I contrive to make the worst possible use of it. It is a wonder I have a single rag on my back. I'm sure I don't deserve to have, for when father gave me a little money last week—and I knew it came hard, too—I went and spent it for an opera ticket. I positively had to hear 'Lohengrin,' though my shoes were disgraceful at that very moment, and I knew it. But wasn't the music grand? I have been living on it ever since, and don't care a straw if my shoes are covered with a disreputable blacking, even to-day, when, of course, Frank will detect it in a minute." She made a pathetic little mouth as she said it, but laughed, and Gertrude kissed her, as she usually did at very short intervals whenever they were together.

"But I got three dollars for a poem yesterday—think of that—my poetry really selling, and at such figures. At a pinch it will buy me a very bad pair of shoes, but I am going to hang on if I can, to sell another, and then buy a swell pair. I dote on high-priced shoes—don't you?"

Gertrude, who had never given a thought to the price of her shoes, said "yes," and that she thought her friend "was

on the high road to fortune, as her literary work had begun to sell."

"Haven't you brought the poem for me to see?" inquired Gertrude, after a pause.

Her friends at school had taken the deepest interest in her literary work, and had done her some good by their free criticism—for so far she had had no criticism from any other source. "Yes—will you hear it now? It is called

"A BROKEN DREAM.

"High roared the flames upon the hearth,
The wind howled fitfully without,
And wind and flame like revellers
Seemed gleefully to laugh and shout,
As Maud and I before the fire
Leaned idly back and smiled and sighed;
Her robe of velvet hung
In shadowy folds down at her side.

"Her golden hair in rippling waves
Hung carelessly below her waist,
And creamy lace from shoulders white
Fell, and its web-like pattern traced.
Her gaze was always on the fire,
And mine was always upon her;
The faint, sweet scent of sandal-wood
Came ever as her fan did stir.

"A score of years, and once again
I sit within the olden room,
And back upon the air there floats
The faint, sweet sandal-wood perfume.
Parted world-wide are Maud and I,
Yet, like a subtle, shy caress,
I feel anear me fall the folds
Of that soft, violet velvet dress.'"

She laughed her mocking yet musical little laugh when she finished, and said, "You would know it anywhere, I suppose you will say."

"Yes, I think I should have recognized the style. You have certain stage properties which you carry with you and with which you set each new piece."

"For instance—you harsh critic and false friend?"

"Your violet velvet dress, your rippling waves of hair, and, indeed, the whole paraphernalia of this piece—but nobody else will detect your mannerisms except the girls—and the little poem is just as sweet as you are yourself," she ended, with an embrace, "and I'm so glad it is accepted by the *Trumpet.* You must send this to Frank—he can't call this a little wail, for it's really quite cheerful for you."

"No, he laughed at my last effusion too unmercifully. I really heard his laugh every time I tried to be dismal on paper, for some time, and it's an interference with my literary capital. My tears are my stock in trade, and if I am so ridiculed that I can't employ them freely I may starve or have to go to work—I don't know which alternative is the most dreadful."

"How strange! I think I should really like to go to work—if I could. I don't know what I could do, I'm sure, if I were really obliged to—but I think I should find something and not dislike the idea at all."

"And there's Isabel positively discontented because her father will not allow her to work. It's because you girls don't know what it means to be tied down to a life of drudgery. You would get sick of it quickly enough, if you had to do it. I absolutely loathe the idea of going into a store, and standing all day tying up packages for supercilious and unreasonable women, or going into a primary school and toiling all day over a lot of little imbeciles, or doing any of the few things I might possibly do, but won't."

"But there must be other work you could do—not so distasteful."

"Yes, I might write in some newspaper office—I should like that—or even do reporting as we have always said; but I don't know as I could find a chance anywhere—the world is so full of scribblers."

Then the girls went to see the conservatory where there were new plants in bloom since Lucile's last visit, went to look at the pretty new things Gertrude had been getting for the summer—which Lucile always insisted upon doing, though Gertrude always tried to avoid showing them—and then they sat at the piano for an hour going over some new songs. Lucile had quite a wonderful voice, her friends thought, and she sang with much feeling and good taste, and Gertrude was also a pleasing though an unpretending singer.

"How do you do, Miss Flite?" was Frank Dana's salutation when he found the girls still at the piano at luncheon time. "Where are your documents? Got any papers along to-day bearing on the celebrated case?"

"Not a paper. I am going to obey the scriptural injunction after this."

"What is that—about casting pearls?"

"Yes; you don't appreciate my melodious madness at all, and I shan't wail for your benefit any further. When I write a column of squibs Ill bring them over."

"Got the last 'Lakeside Musing' here now, shall I read it to you?"

"No, spare us the depths of driveling idiocy."

"Hold on there, don't use strong language, or I'll read you a poem by a young lady, I cut from the *Trumpet* to-day," and he pulled out the slip containing "A Broken Dream."

If there was one torture more exquisite than another to Lucile, it was to be ridiculed, and especially to hear her own poetry read to her in anything but a serious manner, so she flew to his side and endeavored to wrest the poem from him. "Now don't be violent, Miss Flite," cried Frank, between his roars of laughter at her discomfiture, "this is really good. I expect to feel that way myself after twenty years — when I come into the room where you and I have our little quarrels and personal encounters, and catch a whiff from the cigarette."

"Oh, you dreadful creature, I never touched a cigarette in my life."

"Well, then, a faint breath of your vanilla caramels."

"You have not sentiment enough to make you hold an association twenty days, to say nothing of as many years."

"Write a poem on the 'Commonplace Man,' and inscribe it to me. I am rather a hum-drum fellow, I own, but then I can see the sublimity of such a thing as this," and he fumbled in his pocket and brought out one of Lucile's most sorrowful strains. He was about to inflict it upon her when she ran from the room, and did not return. She would not be conciliated at luncheon, and only the prospect of the ride in the parks brought her around afterward. She was too delighted to go to prolong her annoyance longer.

In every fibre of her being she enjoyed the glories of that summer day—the fleet horses, the swift, easy motion, the luxurious carriage, the congenial companionship, the mere sensuous charm of the whole compared, as she compared it, always with the sordid and unpleasant surroundings of her own every-day life. And the others were quite as happy as she, the charm of that enchanted period of life

was about them all. With youth and health and summer, who could not be happy?

"Please, Lucile, do give us a little poetry now," urged Frank, a little later in the afternoon when they were far in the country. "I am really getting quite in the mood for it, and won't say a single disagreeable thing. And let it be as sentimental as possible. I feel inclined that way." He spoke jestingly, but she knew he was in earnest and recited in her quaint way one of her poems called

"IN THE CLOVER.

"Soft is the rosy flush around me,
Deep in the clover here I lie;
Under, the arms of our Mother Nature,
Over, the infinite arch of the sky.

"Trees are tossing their branches 'round me,
Shadows are stretching the fields along;
Over the heads of the waving barley
Comes the sound of the reaper's song.

"Thrush and blue-bird soar above me,
Robin and jay peer in at my bower,
And a brown bumble-bee, life all before him,
Sits alert on a cardinal flower.

"Far away stretch the fields of clover,
Brown in the shadow, red in the sun,
Oat-fields toss in the billowy distance,
There's a fringe of willows where waters run.

"Labor calls in the sharp scythe swinging
Down in the depths of the meadow glooms;
But lotus and balm and sweet nepenthe
Are all in the breath of the clover blooms."

"Excellent, Lucile, you can really do a little bit of description quite admirably. I like this—has it been printed?"

"Yes indeed, and see what it has brought me," and she drew a letter from her pocket, written by a cadet at West Point, expressing much pleasure in the poem, and desiring to

know more of the writer. Lucile was yet too young to the literary life to be at all bored by these tributes of admiration from strangers, although she had had her share for one so new to the work, and she was quite elated over this one—so flattering was it, and yet so guardedly expressed and conventional.

"What do you think of it?" she asked, when Frank had read it.

"Oh, it is a gentlemanly letter, and all right, but I don't like to think of your writing to strangers in that way. You will not answer it?"

"But I have already. I always do. I'm so pleased to think that any one likes what I write that I always tell them so."

"Well, it is not a very good plan for a young girl like you. You may get into some very unpleasant adventures in that way."

"Oh, I never shall know anything about such people—only that they read my verses. Of course I should keep such a correspondence within very formal bounds."

"You would better not indulge in them freely, I think. However, this young scholar is all right, I think. Some enthusiastic youth, with a touch of romance about him."

"Perhaps he's the fated fairy prince we've always been expecting for you," said Gertrude. "I like his hand-writing, anyway. Isn't it peculiar, and I've such a craze for hand-writing. I never saw anything just like this—did you?" and she examined it with the utmost care. "'Arthur L. Stanley,'—a lovely name, too—isn't it?"

This was but one of the many days that the three friends spent that summer, driving through the parks or country roads—often with Isabel or Elinor filling the other seat, and

adding to the variety of the conversation, and the charm of the intercourse. They were fresh to the fields of literature and of life, and all had a keen interest in books and art and music, so that their long conversations were never monotonous, and did not descend into gossip or personalities very easily—though each felt and expressed a true interest in the affairs of the others. Frank was a great favorite with all the girls, none of whom had many familiars among young men, and enjoyed the freedom of their acquaintance with him, and derived much benefit from it. Incidentally they learned much of him, of life which was so new to them, of men and women and the ways of the world, and each one enjoyed his kindly, protecting way, his gay banter, and sharp criticisms, and unconsciously corrected many youthful faults and foibles, under the spell of his keen eye, which detected the immaturity of each, while admiring all.

CHAPTER IV.

"Give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine."—*As You Like It.*

"WE have really a new minister at our church," said Isabel Logan to Elinor Lewis one day, during one of their animated and extended conversations. "I would never have believed it possible, but it is a fact accomplished. I thought Doctor Andrews was going to last my life-time and descend as an heirloom to future generations of the Logans, but the unexpected has happened, as usual."

"Are you so glad, then?"

"Glad? I should think any human being who goes to church would be glad to be rid of such a peddler of platitudes as Doctor Andrews. He belonged to the old Red Sandstone era, and not at all to these new times, and his great, rich church, that ought to be such a power in this wicked city, was simply a close corporation, for soul-insurance."

"You are severe."

"I have a reason to be. Haven't I from childhood wanted that church to arise and shake itself free from the lethargy which had settled upon it, and show some reason for its longer survival in the world, and hasn't that man rested like an incubus on it, an incubus I never hoped to see removed? If it had

not been for mother I should have left it long ago, and gone somewhere where some real work was expected of me. The idea of church members doing nothing in these days, but simply attend church services when perfectly convenient, and give a little money towards its support! That is not my idea of a church, neither is it my idea of the new incumbent, I am happy to say."

"So you have a new pastor, already?"

"Yes; we took the first candidate who preached for us, after the first sermon."

"Rather risky, was it not? A semi-imbecile can get up *one* good sermon—steal it, possibly—but cannot hold out for a long probation."

"There is nothing of the semi-imbecile about Mr. Ray, or the semi-anything else. He's a whole man, and tolerates nothing that is half-way. You must come and hear him—he's so deliciously refreshing after our ancient and honorable friend. He is compound oxygen, after the air of a vault. It is exhilarating, almost intoxicating, to hear him. You ought to hear the dry bones rattle in the church."

"I shall certainly have to come, if for nothing else. I should like to see any set of fossils galvanized, but such a galvanism seldom lasts long."

"But Mr. Ray is not one of the emotional insanity experts, who stirs the feelings and moves the fears of his audience. He is as far as possible from that, speaks in the coolest, most unimpassioned manner, like a business man talking at a Board of Trade meeting about some important matter which he understands better than they, in the common, every-day language of the people, too—short sentences, Saxon words, not a really rounded period in the

whole discourse, and not a half-dozen stock phrases of the preacher."

"He'll not hold out. No man can preach long in that way. He'll have to resort to padding like the rest of them. I must come soon or he'll be played out before I get there."

"It may be, but it's decidedly stimulating while it lasts. Even father goes."

"I have often wondered why a minister cannot preach so that men will go and hear him. If I were a minister and could not hold the men of my congregation I'd pass in my credentials and run a female seminary for a living."

"The men go to your church, do they not?"

"Oh, a small sprinkling—but I attended an Episcopal Church up in Wisconsin last year where they hadn't a single male member, and had to violate all the canons of the church by electing the women to all the offices. It was very comical, and just what the church is tending to everywhere."

"Mr. Ray will have a man's church—see if he don't. Why, the young men just rave about him like girls, and the rear of the church is positively dark from the black coats."

"Verily, I must come. What kind of music do you have?"

"Oh, the trained choir, of course—a very high-priced one, I believe, but Mr. Ray insists that the congregation sing the hymns, and it really makes quite an inspiring noise."

"But they will sing so dreadfully out of time, and some of the women will screech so."

"Truly, but you mustn't be listening for false notes."

During that same week Mr. Ray came to make his first call upon the Logan family. Only Isabel was at home. She received him warmly, and began telling him at once how much she hoped for the church from the new, young blood

which he brought to it. In reply to some of her criticisms of the retiring minister he observed, "Yes, it is very true, some of the older men are still fighting extinct Satans. They would find some that are alive and exceedingly active, close to them, if they would open their eyes. I propose to make an aggressive campaign against the most rampant ones, and shall be very glad to have you help me." He smiled a very genial and inspiring smile as he said it, and she answered, "That is what I want to do. I am now out of school, and feel as though I have a call to do some real work in the world. My father objects to my doing the things I would most like to do—that is, professionally — and if I cannot have a regular business like a man, I must do what I can as an amateur worker, I suppose."

"You will find plenty of employment — and that of a kind hard enough and engrossing enough — if you seek it. The class who can command the leisure must do many things for the world, which the real laborers cannot do. I'm delighted to have found you. I want about a dozen such lieutenants at once. Can't you get me two or three?"

"Yes, I think I can. What for, the mission school?"

"No, not exactly. I want to make our own school a mission school as much as possible. We've lots of room in that big church — good libraries, and all the paraphernalia. I propose to use them just where they are, and fill up the empty benches from the streets."

"Glorious! You don't know how much I have thought about that myself and wondered why it could not be done!"

"Well, come and help me to do it. I have picked up about thirty boys already, and want two or three teachers for them. You can't instruct men or save souls by the wholesale. We've got to get down to the natures of the children, and

even ten are more than we can do justice to, but I think I'll give you ten as a beginning."

"I don't see how you dare trust me. I am so young and inexperienced I'm dreadfully afraid to undertake it.

"You will make plenty of mistakes, but so would an older person. I think you have the real qualification — the enthusiasm for humanity that will bring wisdom with experience — while a mere undertaking of the work as a matter of duty and drudgery would never lead to anything."

"What do you propose to do for them?"

"Elevate their tastes. They have lived the life of the streets, and have the tastes of their kind. By association with a better class they will naturally cultivate a better taste, and when you've given them new thoughts, new aspirations, and a new standard of excellence, why the old will drop off naturally. The one thing to aim at is to elevate their ideal — you understand?"

"I think I do — but I wonder how I am to begin?"

"You will think it over before next Sunday, then come to them with the one idea you will arrive at by that time. Try that, and see how it works. Of course it will take time. You can't work a miracle on these gamins. Have you ever been in the church work before, Miss Logan?"

"No, I have not. I felt very much as if I ought to be a year or two ago, when I first began to know of all the evil things there were all around us. There was so little I could do alone, that I was quite discouraged and I longed for a great and strong organization, with money at command, and fully organized for good works. As I was dreaming of such an organization, and wondering how it could be formed, it suddenly occurred to me that the church was that organization, and much

more powerful and fully equipped than any new one could possibly be; so I went to Doctor Andrews and began to talk to him about starting some work in the church for the cause of temperance, for social purity, and for the prevention of cruelty—the three things I had seen most need of doing—and he looked at me as if he thought I was crazy."

Mr. Ray gave a loud and hearty laugh at this account, and the expression of face which accompanied it, and said:

"What answer did he give?"

"He told me, in effect, that a church was an institution for the saving of souls in a regulation manner, and not a leader in any specific reforms, or a general benevolent society. He also implied that I was a very foolish and presumptious child, and had better go back to my spelling lessons."

"And you went?" with another merry laugh, which rather disconcerted Isabel, who was nothing if not earnest.

"Yes, I went, and I was so chilled and disappointed that I have never thought of working in any way through the church, until now. I supposed I had to find some other channel for useful work in the world."

"Well, your own idea of the office of the church and my own agree more nearly than yours and Doctor Andrews' did. My chief interest in the church is in the work it can do for the world—the real, practical, every-day work, in which the members, as well as the minister, can engage. I shall appoint you a sort of a second-lieutenant, as they do in the Salvation Army—will you accept?"

"Indeed I will. I am very anxious for a chance to work."

"Shake hands on it, then—and come around Sunday," and Mr. Ray gave her hand a shake which nearly paralyzed it, laughed, and said, "And you won't forgive Doctor Andrews?"

"No, I don't think I can. He came near making a sceptic of me, and that's an unpardonable sin, I think."

He went his way, and she sat down to think very seriously of the new work she had promised to undertake. Her nature was intensely earnest, even serious, and she brought with her zeal knowledge as well, for her mind was the equal of her heart, and had been skillfully trained since earliest childhood by her father, a man of great intellectual force and very decided character. He was proud of his daughter's abilities, delighted in her originality and daring, and yet had the strongest objections to her making any outside use of her faculties and training. He wanted her to be a purely domestic woman, as her mother had been, and to be contented in a woman's usual work, while all the forces within her were crying aloud for exercise in their proper fields, and while her wonderful energy and enthusiasm were running to waste, for want of proper objects upon which to expend themselves. He would not object to church work, Isabel knew, for that was considered woman's proper work, and while he had great contempt for churches as a whole—even a peculiar contempt for Mrs. Logan's church, about which he knew more than of others—she was sure she might spend as much time and strength and money on it as she pleased. She was delighted at the opportunity and wonderfully interested in the new schemes of work she was sure Mr. Ray would inaugurate. Of that gentleman himself she was a good deal afraid, especially since this call. In the first place, he was a formidable-looking person—tall, broad chested, and square shouldered, swarthy dark, with piercing black eyes, and hair worn long and brushed away from a very pale, broad forehead. He was the very reverse in appearance of the ordinary minister, and never by any possibility taken by strangers for one

of that profession. Then he was decidedly unique in manner and expression, and Isabel did not quite know how to take him, or quite how he would take her. She suspected he was laughing at her in his heart, and thinking how soon all this fine enthusiasm of hers would wear off before real work.

She wondered if Gertrude Dana would not take one of the classes, as her family belonged to this church, and was surprised in running over the list of her acquaintances, to find how few she could consider at all in such a connection. Then she wondered what was the one thought she should carry to these boys, and how she should impress it upon them. Many things passed through her mind, but the one phrase that stayed longest was embodied in a little hymn she had somewhere heard, with the refrain, "Let us be tender, trusty and true," and she finally concluded to make that the lesson. It would stick in their memories, she thought, and it was worthy of a lodgment there. She would talk to them a little upon each point — what it was to be tender, to be trusty, to be true — and she would tell them, also, the story of the life of Christ, in her own simple language.

Next Sunday Mr. Ray gave a short, business-like talk, graced with a good many original ways of putting things, about the harvest being plenteous but the laborers few. He told what he thought the church — this particular church — ought to undertake in several different lines, and how impossible it would be to do this work without a strong force of workers. He assured them that every person there present had a call to work in some of these departments — each must choose for himself — but all could do something. Then he made the matter practical by requesting all who were willing to be assigned to duty to remain after the service. Isabel, who was thrilled through and through with the discourse — embodying, as it did, so many of

her own dreams — was greatly surprised at the number that remained, and more surprised when she saw more clearly who they were. It was a revelation to her of the willing spirit which she had not thought to be contained in that congregation, and made her regret her uncharitable judgment of them in time past. Among those who remained were Frank and Gertrude Dana, which pleased her very much. Other meetings were appointed for consultation and organization, and then Isabel repaired with others to the Sunday-school rooms.

She found her ten boys — a bright-looking but rough contingent — and she talked with them for awhile by way of getting acquainted before she began any formal instruction. They were jolly and quick-witted, and quite ready to make friends with the new teacher. She liked them very much, and was overjoyed at the prospect of being able to help them on their hard ways through life. She put her whole mind into the thought of how she could accomplish the most for them, and in her talk to them upon the words which she proposed should be the motto of their class, she put so much feeling and earnestness, that Mr. Ray, who stood at her back and heard without being seen, was not only gratified but much astonished. "I have struck one of the right kind, anyway," he thought exultantly, "if I were only sure of a few more," and he moved away that she might not know he had overheard.

Gertrude had been chosen to a class of girls of similar character and antecedents to Isabel's boys, and Frank was in consultation with Mr. Ray as to where he could work to the best advantage. From this day Isabel's old feeling of discontent and almost of resentment at Fate which had not given her work according to her strength, passed away. She was happy now, for she had found her work.

CHAPTER V.

"Better conquest canst thou never make
Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts
Against these giddy, loose suggestions."—*King John.*

WHEN Lucile alighted from the carriage that evening and ran up the steps of her own home, after the gay and affectionate adieux, she was happy—almost perfectly so. She had had one of her royal days, days when the world had gone as she wished, and when her mood of contentment had undergone none of those sudden and violent changes to which it was sometimes subject. If life could be but a succession of such days, she thought, how beautiful were life. She had leaned back in the carriage, silent for the last part of the ride, dreaming what life might be under happier circumstances, and wondering whether fortune would ever change for her. She was sure it would to-night. She felt the utmost confidence in the future and only wondered how she could but endure the present until the happy moment arrived when she should be freed from the thrall of untoward circumstance, and brought unto her own. Youth is apt to think that love and joy and freedom are its own inheritance, and that it is kept out of its own if other things than these befall. And Lucile had an accession of such confidence to-night—a gift from the happy day she had spent—and kept softly repeating to herself one of her favorite poems

as she sat in the gathering twilight with a far-away look on her face:

"Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more gainst time or fate,
For, lo! my own shall come to me.

"The stars come nightly to the sky,
The dews fall on the thirsty lea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me."

In this serene and joyous mood she entered the house and sought her mother. But the air of the place chilled her instantly. She lost her exhilaration before she had fairly taken off her wraps and made her greetings to the family. This home was never a comfortable one. Many others as humble, and much more so, are cozy and pleasant, and seem genuine homes to the inmates. But here a sort of shabby-genteel misery was indicated by everything. Disorder prevailed, nothing was done on time, makeshifts were apparent everywhere, and the best results in comfort and convenience were realized from no expenditure.

There are many such homes, presided over by inefficient women, and it matters little whether they are homes of poverty or homes of ease and luxury, they are not comfortable homes, not homes at all in the best sense of that word. Lucile often thought of the Jellaby family and their fortunes as she looked about their own home — though things were not nearly so bad here—and wondered whether it could be much worse if her mother had a "mission" and spent all her time and thought upon Africa. But with no thought except for the comfort and well-being of her own, poor Mrs. Layton toiled on from morning until night in a weak, disjointed manner, and the end was never efficiency and good order, but always a sort of shiftless carica-

ture of these. She was a woman who seldom went beyond the doors of her own dwelling, yet there were many homes in her own circle where the women went and came and engaged, perhaps, in many outside undertakings, where good order and comfort reigned, with far less exhausting toil on the part of the home-makers.

This practical inefficiency is the worst curse that can befall a woman — except it be the curse of sin or crime. It leads up to all misery for her through the threatened ruin of her family — for such families seldom emerge from the shadow of their homes into the positions of usefulness and honor to which they might aspire, if they were brought up in well-regulated and thrifty homes. If any of the family do reach such positions it is through a much harder path than their more fortunate fellows find, and some traces of their lack of proper early culture and training are apt to cling to them to the end.

From some hereditary source Lucile had been endowed with a nature to which the every-day conditions of her life were torture. She longed for order, for beauty, for symmetry, with the insatiable longing of a gifted and highly-endowed nature. This confusion and unthrift distracted her. It seemed impossible to her to bring order out of this chaos, but quite as impossible to be otherwise than miserable in its midst. She was daintily neat about her own personal surroundings, and fastidious in the care of her own room, where she would permit no encroachments of other members of the family; and she made many over-violent attempts at metamorphosing the entire household, but to small purpose. To-night, when she entered the sitting-room, she had to pick her way carefully, or stumble in the semi-darkness over heaps of books and papers lying upon the floor where the children had been pasting scrap books, and where they had left the

whole debris for mother to clear away if she ever got around to it from her other cares. Lucile tried to light a lamp that she might straighten the disordered room, but found that no one would burn without trimming. She sighed and proceeded to trim the lamps. Then she spent an hour in putting away what the children should have been required to put away themselves, and in putting the room in some kind of order for the morning. She was very patient about it to-night, for her happy mood was still upon her, and she went and hunted her mother up, and insisted that she come in and enjoy the orderly room, and let all other work go till to-morrow.

"Come and sit down here, little mamma," she said, as she kissed the fair, sweet-faced little woman, "and I will hunt up the children and put them to bed, for I've been resting all day, while you've been toiling and mending."

"And have you had a nice day, dearie?" the tired little woman asked, as she sank in the rocker with a grateful sigh.

"Oh, a perfect day, mamma — riding all the afternoon in the country. You can't imagine how I've enjoyed it. Where are the children?"

"I don't know. I wish you would hunt them up, and get them to bed before your father comes home. The children annoy him so, lately."

So Lucile sought them in the street where they were enjoying the cool air of the evening, and running up and down with other children — brought them very unwillingly in and proceeded to the really momentous undertaking of getting them to bed. They were never willing to go to bed, and every night the battle had to be fought over — the coaxing, the commanding, the bribing, the laborious process of washing them, and getting them finally bestowed in their beds, cross and utterly worn

out with the struggle. Lucile was fond of the children, but this nightly worry irritated her, and she longed for some authority in the household which should say go, and come, and be obeyed. She had plenty of will-power and would have established such authority herself, but that her mother always interfered with all her efforts and begged that the "poor little things" be allowed to do as they please — to the utter discomfort of the whole family.

There were two boys and two girls, the youngest almost a baby; and when Lucile had disposed of the older ones she took the little Mary in her arms and sat and rocked her by the open window, singing the words which had been with her in her mood of elation — even now, in her swiftly changing one of discontent and worry—

"Serene, I fold my hands and rest,"

over and over as the little nestling head grew heavier, and the little, tightly-clasped hands fell apart. The child was a beautiful one, with long, flaxen curls which it was Lucile's delight to brush and fondle, and with eyes of blue, like spring violets. Lucile often wished for her a happier fate than seemed possible with the family fortunes in their present low state, and wondered what might be her future, could she be transplanted to a different home. She was already growing naughty and defiant, although not three years old; and Lucile was afraid she might become another spoiled child, to add to her mother's burdens, but she did not see any way to prevent it, and comforted herself somewhat with the thought that she had emerged from just such a hopeless lack of training and discipline — not entirely spoiled, though she could plainly see with faults which would make her life-long trouble.

Through all the dejection which was lying in wait for her here in her home, to-night she kept up the happy strain, and as she carried little Mary up the stairs her voice sounded back and cheered her mother's heart, repeating once again the words:

"What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap what it has sown,
And gather up the fruit of tears.

"The planets know their own, and draw,
The tide returns to meet the sea;
I stand, serene, midst nature's law,
And know my own shall come to me."

The mother blessed her as she sang, and looked forward fondly to her future; for this oldest daughter, with her gifts and graces, was the idol of the little mother's heart, and she worshipped her with unalloyed devotion, and saw no fault in her whatever. The other children were more or less a trial to her still, but Lucile had emerged from all her childish willfulness and exactions, and was simply perfect in her mother's eyes, whatever she did. She had a mother's fond faith that the rest of the little brood would turn out quite as well, and though for the present she was severely taxed to manage them, and to put up with all their misdemeanors, she had no fears for their future excellence.

Beautiful mother faith—but how often it is disappointed! How many wayward sons and daughters go out from just such trusting love, and prove a lasting sorrow and disgrace. Oh, if wisdom could be added to all fond mother love, how lessened the sum of human misery might be! But wisdom comes not upon call, and folly is an ever-present guest in the homes of men.

Lucile sat long at her window that night, leaning out to see the steadfast stars, which comforted her, for her mood had grown more somber now, and she was dwelling upon the dark side of her family life, and wondering anew what the future must bring to them all. For the little girls she did not so much worry, but the two strong, bright boys, old enough now to need the wisest care and gentlest guiding — her heart was very heavy for them — and she wished, unutterably, that such care and worry had not been forced upon her — that she might enjoy the rightful light-heartedness of youth.

The next afternoon Isabel Logan came to see her, and among the other subjects of conversation her class of boys in Mr. Ray's Sabbath-school came up, and she told with much animation what she meant to try to do for them, and how exceedingly interested she was in the work.

"How I wish you could get Clyde and Vincent to join the class, Isabel," said Lucile, much interested in the new scheme for usefulness. "They are getting no moral training whatever. They are simply running wild and I am so worried about them. I can't do much with them — they know me too well — how faulty and selfish I am. But I am sure you could influence them if you could once get hold of them."

"I should love to have them. Can't I see them to-day, and try a little harder to get acquainted than I have ever done before?"

"Yes indeed, stay with me to-day; they will soon be around, never fear about that, for I have just got the house straightened up once more, and then we'll get up a visit with them. It will be easy enough."

"The boys are bright and I always have hopes of children who have anything about them you can appeal to."

"Yes, they are as bright as need be — and not bad, either — but just willful and mischievous, and ready to do anything for excitement and change. They are young America with a vengeance."

After awhile the boys came in and began getting down their famous scrap books and preparing to litter up once more, when Isabel said:

"I should like to see your scrap books — will you show them to me?" They did so eagerly, and explained all the pictures and told what the design of the whole was, in a very animated way. The scrap books were the pride of their hearts.

"Have you got a motto for the books?"

"No, but we ought to have, hadn't we? Tell us a good one."

"I have a motto of which I am very fond, and my class of boys about your ages, in Sabbath-school, have adopted the motto, and say they are bound to live up to it, too."

"What is it? If we like it we'll adopt it, too."

"Let us be tender, trusty, and true."

"That sounds very pretty, but tell us about it. What does it mean to your boys?"

Then she told them, as she had the class before, what it was to be tender, and she drew many illustrations of what it was to be cruel — from among their own every-day doings and sayings — among others this one: "When you come home some day, and mamma and sister have been very hard at work putting the house in order, and cleaning up after some of your plays, and you know they are tired, and that they like to see the house look neat and smiling, and not disorderly, don't you think it is a little cruel of you to hurt their feelings so thoughtlessly by going to work and just for your own gratification turning it all

topsy-turvy again? Just a little cruel, I say, not half so much so as to torment a cat or abuse a dog, or kill a bird, but is it not something of the same nature, something that gives needless pain?"

The boys listened in wonder, and discussed the point with great earnestness, but finally agreed that it was about the same thing, and well worth trying to avoid, then called for the explanation of the other two words. They got several points for personal application from each, but very warily put, and then Isabel told them all about the school, who her class were and what she wanted to do for them. They were greatly interested in the account, and said, when she came to a pause:

"Is it full? Can't we come? That must be a jolly kind of a class—let us join."

Isabel replied that she would be most pleased to have them, and told again of the library and the papers, which she saw would be an inducement to such boys as these. The motto was printed in great style in the scrap books, Isabel showing them how to make the large ornamental letters, to their great satisfaction. She won two staunch and loyal followers that day, and felt that she had never done a better day's work. She remembered Mr. Ray's words—elevate their ideal. What must the ideal of such boys as these necessarily be? All the men they know smoke and chew, and the most of them doubtless swear and drink, if they go no further in the way of the vicious. All the older boys they know do these things, and swagger about and tyrannize over smaller boys, and deceive their parents and teachers, and try to avoid useful work as much as possible. These are apt scholars and ready to copy in detail the examples before them just as soon as possible. What a benefit it must be if they can be taught to look with a fine scorn upon

such ideals as have been before them, and to adopt those of a higher grade — the ideals of temperance, of purity, of gentleness, of self-denial. She could point these out to them in books, but if she knew more men and boys to whom she could point personally and say, These are clean and pure and chivalrous, how much better they would be.

"Is there any one the boys know of whom I can make an ideal for them?" she asked Lucile, after talking this all over with her that she might aid her in her efforts.

"Only Francis Dana that I can think of, and of course they do not know him well. But they consider him the one gentleman of their acquaintance, and are a little inclined to model themselves upon him I see, in little things."

"That is excellent — they could not do better; and you must tell them more than they will be likely to find out for themselves, how such a young man as that amuses himself, and particularly of the things he does not do."

"He is going to work with Mr. Ray, you say. What will he do?"

"He is to be the leader of the White Cross Society — the social purity league, you know — where each one makes a vow like King Arthur's knights of old, to keep himself unspotted from the world. Mr. Ray preaches next Sunday from the text 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' and organizes the society. He will be very plain and practical, I can tell you. Come and hear him and bring the boys—even they will understand."

"What a new sort of preacher this Mr. Ray must be! Why doesn't he keep on preaching about the Jews and the prophecies, about circumcision and uncircumcision, the keeping of days and the worship of idols, like the rest of them? What does he mean by trying to save the world in these new-fangled ways?"

"He has seen the futility of the old way, I fancy. But he is an original man and could not work in anybody's harness but his own. But the best thing about him is that he puts everybody else to work, and multiplies himself a hundred-fold. Think what a church like ours can do, with all the members, or even half, really in earnest to do some helpful work. It really inspires me to think of it, and I see every day more and more the immeasurable need of this army of workers — here in the city alone."

"I am glad you have found your place, Isabel. You were always pining for some great work. You'll be very happy, now."

"Indeed I shall. The days are not long enough for all I want to do. Emerson says life is unnecessarily long, and I used to think so, too — the time seemed so slow in passing — but now it is so different."

"I must come and hear your 'prophet of the soul,' and see if I can't get a new thought to set my life to. I am sadly in need of one."

Then they drifted off on to lighter themes, and read with great enthusiasm the three or four letters which had by this time been received from Arthur Stanley, of West Point — the letters of a very young man, evidently, but one of fine taste, rare culture, and romantic temperament. Lucile was taking wonderful interest in this correspondence, her friends all discovered; and Frank Dana had felt so much concerned about it that he had written to a friend of his own at the academy to ascertain who the young man might be. The reply had been entirely favorable — a man of old New England family, holding a fine position, of studious habits and refined tastes; he was heartily recommended to the Western friend by

the military student. "I send him all my poetry, now," Lucile had told her friend, "and you should see the criticisms he writes — whole sheets — and it does me lots of good, too. I am improving every week, I assure you."

CHAPTER VI.

"Yield not neck
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance."—*Henry IV., Part 3.*

IT was now several months since Elinor Lewis had discovered the little pianist, and she had been profiting very much from his instruction. She had also enjoyed very much the time spent with him over her music, and the hour which usually followed, when he played for her with all the passionate abandon of repressed genius — the music for which few other people in his world cared in the least. Elinor appreciated it thoroughly, and he knew it. He wondered much at finding this untaught American girl a judge of the best in the realm of music, and he also greatly marvelled at her quick intelligence upon other matters, to which the conversation occasionally turned. She had requested him to speak only German to her during his visits, and, although she spoke fairly well at first, he was much gratified at the very rapid improvement she made. He began to talk to her about German literature out of mere intellectual longing, at first, to have some companionship in his reading, but soon with a warm personal interest to know how she liked his favorite authors — his favorite bits of those authors — rare little poems whose spirit he could sometimes give her, when she could only get at the form alone, and sometimes in passioned lays whose

meaning had to be long sought after by their combined study.

He was also a brilliant and most enthusiastic classical scholar, and more than delighted to supplement Elinor's school knowledge of the Latin authors by readings conducted under his own eye, and by long dissertations upon their beauties, poured into her willing ears. For Elinor had a real taste for these things and felt that her own knowledge was very superficial, while here was one really learned, and with exquisite taste, who could lead her a long way in the direction she wished to go, and upon the easiest terms to herself. As before intimated, her family were unwilling that she should go abroad for study; and this teacher, who had dropped from the skies, as it were, could help her as well as any foreigner of them all, both in music and in the languages. She heralded his praises everywhere, got together little knots of musicians to hear him, all of whom became as enthusiastic as herself, procured advanced scholars for him, set the fashion of having him to play at musical soirees, and, in short, made his fortune for him if he chose to take it, in a very short time. Her father and mother paid no attention to all this. Elinor was a girl of excellent judgment and good sense, and if she had a new teacher over whom she was unusually enthusiastic, they only thought it a bit of good luck for her, and observed that he was a most gentlemanly person — quite distinguished-looking too — if he were not a cripple. Whereupon Elinor remarked that he looked like Lord Byron, and that his lameness was the same as that unhappy poet's.

On the evening before he was to give her the usual lesson, a few months after their first meeting, Herr Hardige sat in the solitude of his comfortless room in the third story of a large lodging house in a distant part of the city. The twilight was

fast deepening into darkness, but he had no mind to change it for light, as in moody, scornful sorrow he looked within his own soul, and backward upon his life. It had been a life of sorrow, of repression, of rebellious beating against fate, yet of high ambition, lofty feeling and indomitable energy. Yet a terrible failure it seemed to him to-night. He went back to the little cottage at Eisenbach, where he had been born, near the birthplace of the great Luther, where he had been doomed to fight the battle of the world against such tremendous odds. How bitterly it came over him that as a baby he had been unwelcome, not the longed-for first born of fortunate parents, but the last fledgling in an already crowded nest, that had not been over tenderly cared for, his affliction rendering him a burden from which he fancied his parents would willingly have been relieved; that as a child he had been the butt of his playmates' ridicule, who drove him frantic, taunting him with being cloven-footed; and that even as a youth he had known nothing better than pity and toleration on account of his infirmity. There was one boy among his playmates who would probably remember him. He thought of it with extreme satisfaction, even to-night, how he had answered some of this tormentor's insults to the little cripple, by a blow which had broken the little miscreant's arm. That blow had in a sense made his fortune, for the fame of it had reached the great people of the place, who began to take an interest in the brave little fellow who would not brook an insult, even though he were lame, and smaller than his persecutor.

One of these ladies discovered his talent and passion for music, gave him lessons herself, and afterward provided him with masters, until he could teach and so make his way in the world. The great people were all good to him. One taught him his

Latin and Greek, another bought him his piano, and another never allowed him to want for books. They liked to have him at their houses, too, where he sometimes stayed for weeks, and after awhile even spent most of his time. They delighted in his music, after the true German fashion, and invited their friends to it as to a great treat. Great things were predicted of him, great homage done to his genius by all with whom he came in contact in those days. He was young and of the poetic temperament, and very ignorant of the world. So that while yet a boy he had allowed himself to fall in love with a great lady—a boy's love, to be sure, but deep, mad, passionate, while it lasted. He remembers it with strange feelings to-night. All the enchantment of the hours when he was in a fool's paradise comes over him. He sees the moonlight in which the old castle lay, on the nights when he wandered around in the park, too restless to sleep; he hears the flowing of the river over its rocky bed, the scream of the night birds, and smells the very odor of the jasmine that climbed over her casement. He was awakened soon enough when his folly was suspected, and dismissed from among his grand patrons. It was then that he went to Leipsic, where many years were happily spent as a musician, despairingly as a man. He never could or would make friends with those who would have been called his equals, and he had had a fearful wound from the caste to which he felt he belonged by the divine right of genius. His lofty pride tortured him now, even among the great people with whom he could have moved. He had been taught the dividing line between the artist and the man, and he held the lesson in eternal remembrance. He brooded over his disabilities, until even his music, and the treasures of literature, with which he was by this time familiar in many tongues, had no power to relieve his tortured self-love.

This was what had brought him to America. Here, he believed, all men were considered equals. Our pleasant fiction had been received by him as a verity, and at great sacrifice he had come to the land where he could be the equal of the best, and be esteemed not only as an artist but as a man. He had suffered terribly from homesickness and even from privation — for he had all the short-comings of genius, and did not know how to make his great gifts and acquirements of practical use to himself. America was to him a crude, barbaric land, where there was great material prosperity, but nothing else, and he pined always for the Fatherland and the haunts of his youth. Pined, if he would have acknowledged it to himself, even more for the adulation and incense to which he had been accustomed, and of which he found no echo in this vast, new land, whose illimitable distances wearied him, and with whose institutions and excellencies he had, as yet, no sympathies, because he had no knowledge. He was winning success now — he no longer need worry about money — and he was finding out that there was musical culture and musical feeling even here, and that he would be recognized and have his triumphs as of old.

But all this seemed as nothing to him to-night. What cared he any more for artistic triumphs? How cheap the plaudits of the crowd had come to be! How he suffered for recognition of another kind! How the great heart of the man, as of the boy, hungered for its daily bread, for its own meed of admiration and love, while the great world coldly gave him a stone! How natural is this hunger for the appreciation of the like-minded! The opinion of the great world of men is a small matter to us all.

We can bear it well that they do not in the least recognize us — we do not expect it after our earliest youth — but to come

to our own and have them receive us not, this is the bitterness of spirit for which there is no balm—this is the cup of grief we all pray may pass from us. Herr Hardige was beginning to find a little consolation in the society of two or three literary men who had been interested in some matters of criticism he had made for a literary paper, and who had sought his acquaintance and regarded him as a man well worth cultivating. But, as yet, these friendships were not close — mere episodes in the careers of busy men, and not that close heart-companionship for which this passionate soul was always longing. He was dreaming, too, in these days, of undertaking some purely literary work, for which he had much taste and some talent — but, as yet, he only dreamed. Why he was so sad to-night he hardly knew, for his lot was certainly bettering itself day by day, and he had really great cause to expect much from life in the future, but he was fully in the possession of a grief without a pang — dull, hard and drear — a nameless, drowsy, unimpassioned grief, which finds no natural outlet, no relief, and so turns the heart to stone. After a miserable night over the books, to which he turns as a diversion, when he finds sleep will not come, he makes his way to Miss Lewis' home at the appointed time. She is already in the library where the piano stands, and greets him cordially as he enters. She perceives at once that he is pale and haggard, and hastens to say, "Are you not well, Herr Hardige?"

"No, I am not well," as he seats himself at the piano.

"Shall we not put the lesson off? I am sure you will find it hard to listen to my bad playing this morning."

He did not answer but began to play — a low, weird strain, that sounded like the wailing of a lost spirit — over and over again — until her heart ached at the sound, feeling that it was

somehow an expression of his mood, a putting of his thoughts upon the keys. She felt the utmost sympathy with him, and longed to know the cause of his unhappiness, but felt that she would risk much in giving him a word or look of sympathy. She leaned back in her chair and became absorbed in the theme, which changed at times, but never lost its dismal sweetness. When he grew tired of this he turned toward her and said:

"We will not have the lesson to-day. I am too full of discords already. I must do something to get in better tune, or all my strings will snap. Let us read a little Latin — that will tone me up like wine. But don't mind if I am exasperating. There is a demon in me, badly controlled this morning. Aren't you afraid?"

He smiled as he seated himself near her and opened the book, but his eyes were full of a sadness that was painful to her. How very handsome he looked in his pallor and dejection, she thought, as she glanced at him before opening her book, and she could hardly keep her mind upon the reading at first, for wondering what had happened to hurt him so. But when they were fairly launched in the reading both became absorbed in it, and forgot all outward things. It went on for an hour, when he suddenly closed the book and arose to go.

"To-morrow we will try the lesson, if you please. I shall have thrown my demon by that time."

"I hope so, indeed. Can't I give you ever so little of my strength to aid you in the undertaking? I'm very strong, you know."

"Yes, but not used to wrestling with demons. Your face would not be so calm, so unmoved, if you ever had a violent struggle like mine with the powers of darkness."

"My very calmness might quell your tumult."

"No, a tumult is my native air. I shall never be a calm and sane man. I rush from one excitement to another, and delight in my own misery. You cold-hearted people should pity us poor, starving souls. We make an unending succession of hells for ourselves. Dante was one of us—and that is where he got his conception of the great poem."

He seemed loath to go, now that he was ready, and lingered talking for some time, but when he was finally at the door gave her his hand, a quite unusual thing, and said:

"Pardon me for taking up so much of your good time, and play well to-morrow."

When he was gone Elinor resumed the book they had been reading—at least she held it in her hand, but her thoughts were far from being on its pages. Spite of herself they followed the man who had left her, and hung in pity about the lonely, desolate room to which he had gone. He had told her what that room was—what any man's room was to which no woman contributed of her nature—had often excused himself for staying so long in the pleasant library, by saying that the very air of the place had an enchantment for one who was used to blank walls and comfortless surroundings. When he was ill, too, she thought, how intensified must every discomfort be, how unendurable the dreary monotony. She wished he would allow himself to make some friends, who could minister to his comfort, that he would live in somebody's home, and not bear that isolated, intolerable life any longer. Then when she found where her thoughts were dwelling, she arose hastily and went at once about the varied occupations of her day, sternly repressing every wandering thought.

Next morning he came again—cold, collected, business-like, and went mechanically through the lessson, saluted her form-

ally and departed. But she noted that he looked quite as ill as ever, and she would have said a sympathetic word had she dared.

But he was sternly repressed this morning, evidently bound to fight down his trouble, whatever it was, alone and in silence; so she accepted that as best and said no word. But she found herself sitting in the same chair as yesterday and brooding again, almost with anger, and rose up with a haughty air, and went up to dress for the street.

Elinor had never had thoughts of her own to flee from before. She had led a quiet, well-ordered existence, and had never been stirred by any strong feeling. Her life had been a fortunate and favored one. Even the usual restlessness of youth had been tempered for her, by calm sense and a contented spirit, and this new feeling which began to constrain her, irritated, almost angered her. Why should her calm be invaded by this unwelcome tumult? she demanded of herself.

CHAPTER VII.

"Mute wonder lurketh in men's ears
To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences."—*Henry V.*

SHE turned her steps toward Isabel Logan's home, and was much pleased when she entered to find that Mr. Ray was there. She had wished to meet him and judge for herself of his quality. She had not been much pleased with what she had heard of his preaching. She belonged to an Episcopal family, who had great contempt for sensational preachers, under which class she was inclined to rank this new star in the city firmament. To be sure, she thought highly of Isabel's judgment, but she fancied her friend might be over-pleased with the new incumbent because it was such a very great relief to be rid of the old. She glanced with great interest at the minister as he arose to greet her. He was certainly a striking figure, she thought, but his eyes were unpleasantly penetrating, she added, after one glance into their depths.

"Oh, Elinor, Mr. Ray has discovered your little pianist. He has just been telling me about him," was Isabel's first remark, when they were seated.

Elinor colored a little, and said, "I don't know why you should call him my little pianist, exactly. Herr Hardige would resent the phrase, I think."

"I fancy so," laughed Mr. Ray, "his pride is a little the fiercest, I think, of any that I have ever dealt with. How do you manage to get on with him, Miss Lewis?"

"I do not have the slightest difficulty. I treat him with the consideration due a gentleman, and he has nothing to resent."

"Oh, but Elinor, you must have learned how to manage him, for I remember your telling me how he resented your discovery of his lameness," said Isabel.

"True, but I think I must have been very ill-bred to have allowed him to see that I had noticed it. I should probably not have done so if he had been what I thought my superior, instead of a teacher, to whom I unconsciously condescended a little. There is no need of one condescending to Herr Hardige, and he knows it and will not tolerate the act. When once you have learned that, there is no trouble in getting on with him more than with another."

"Thank you for the key to the situation, Miss Lewis. I never meant to condescend to the professor, I am sure. As you say, there is not the slightest call for it. He is the peer of the best. But I have such a habit of thinking I must do something for everybody—particularly any one who is poor, or a stranger, or unappreciated—that I suppose I from mere professional instinct undertook something of it in his case."

"With what result, may I ask?" asked Miss Lewis, smiling.

"With the result of being most royally snubbed. I have not had so contemptuous a look cast upon me since my earliest recollection. It was simply annihilating. I have hardly rallied yet."

"I can fancy it. As Miss Logan intimated, I had one lesson of that kind myself. But having learned it, all is well. Do you not consider him a genius?"

"Of a high order. Not a one-sided genius, either—he knows many things besides music. I was led to seek him out from some of his criticisms—they betrayed the scholar very quickly.

And I find him so enthusiastic a classical scholar that I am very anxious to make friends with him. Perhaps I shall be able to do so, still."

"Doubtless. I think he is exceedingly lonely here, and would much appreciate your friendship. But don't dare suggest help or comfort if you wish to succeed."

"How unhappy such pride must make a person! And yet you can't help admiring the man for his dignity and high bearing. If he were not a superior man, it would of course render him ridiculous, but when you admit that he is, it is only right and becoming."

Mr. Ray took his leave soon after, and Isabel invited her friend to come and hear the sermon next day upon keeping oneself unspotted from the world, which she promised to do with great pleasure. Elinor did not go expecting to be pleased, but she found herself interested from the first moment by the intense moral fervor of the man. He spoke of the hardness of the public conscience against great sins. It seemed easier, he said, to interest men and enlist their sympathies, in any matter of trivial import, than it was to do so in regard to the two greatest sins and crimes of the human race, intemperance and licentiousness. Perhaps it was the appalling magnitude of these evils; they were so strong, so powerful, so entrenched in the habits of the world, had shown themselves so little amenable to law, or to any modification by any of the efforts so far made for their suppression, that a great weight of discouragement lay in the way of every man whose conscience was aroused as to their enormities — a discouragement which many people found simply impossible to overcome. All efforts to subdue these monsters have heretofore failed. We are not stronger or wiser than those other laborers who have sunk in the furrow, ex-

hausted with fruitless toil. It must be that these sins belong to our human nature, and that no effort of man will ever eradicate them. We will do what we can to ameliorate them, but we have no hope of successfully coping with them. This, he presumed, was the attitude of this church at this moment. It was the attitude of all but a small minority everywhere.

He confessed he did not belong to this ruling class. For himself he had heard a voice cry "Preach," and he must preach. Instant in season and out of season he must call upon all men everywhere to repent and do the works of righteousness. It was no concern of his how mighty the undertaking — if God had called him to enter upon it he must work there, at that especial thing, until death relieved him, if need be. That these sins are so universal, so strong, so popular, so enticing to all classes and conditions of men, was but the stronger reason why every man and woman with a conscience to be moved, should rise up and join the ranks of that great multitude which no man can number, who have always been found fighting with God against sin. To-day the canker and the blight of these pet sins of men are upon almost every home. The horrible sufferings of little children from their effects he dwelt upon; the inherited curses which made life so grievous a burden to such a multitude he depicted in appealing words; and without telling just what the work to which he called them was, he asked all who were willing to join the army of attack for a life-long war upon these twin curses, to remain with him at the close of the service.

The number who did so remain was astonishingly large to those who knew the apathy of this church — as of other churches — to all reformatory work. Among those remaining Elinor was much astonished to see Herr Hardige. She had

never seen him at church before, and could only suppose he had come out of curiosity to hear his new acquaintance. Mr. Ray went to him as people stood in groups talking, and shook him warmly by the hand, saying:

"This is good, indeed. I need men like you. We want knowledge as well as zeal in this undertaking."

"I shall be little wise in it, I think. But I said to myself, I will stay and help this first man whom I have ever known to even try to check these crimes. You ministers do not much do such things, I think. I am no good man, no religious man — far from it — but I am a clean man; I loathe the leprosy of these social vices. I can bear no man who is common and unclean, and I will help what I can, to tell the young how the wages of sin is death."

"You will help me infinitely by your spirit, if in no other way. It is good to find a young man in these days who dares say that much. Here is one more who has the courage, Mr. Dana — Herr Hardige, he is one of my stanch friends in this work."

To one of the parlors the gentlemen retired, and the Society of the White Cross was organized with much earnestness of feeling — each one present taking the beautiful pledge of that organization. Isabel had gone to her class-room accompanied by Elinor, and they found there Lucile, who had brought the two boys. They had heard the sermon and declared the minister "jolly," which was their patent of excellence put upon everything with which they became acquainted. Isabel was much pleased that even her boys had been interested in the appeal — as so few sermons would have held their attention at all. She explained to them the work of the new society Mr. Ray was organizing, and gave each a card which he might sign and bring to her next Sabbath, if, after thinking it all over, they felt sure that they

would try to live up to the spirit of the society. All were ready to sign to-day, but she thought it better they should wait, and consider what they were undertaking. She wished no one to join who would break his pledge. So none must take it lightly.

The Church Temperance Society would be formed next Sabbath, and she asked all the boys to be at the service and hear what Mr. Ray had to say to them at that time.

All were asked whether they thought they had lived up to the spirit of their class motto the past week, and there were some confessions of failure, and some modest reports of success.

Then all the class were invited to spend the next evening with the teacher at her home, where they would have games and some music. The boys were shyly pleased with this invitation and promised to come. Then Isabel gave each the name of a book he might draw from the library — books she had examined and selected with great care, and about each of which she would talk with them after they were read.

"Isabel will really do something for those boys," Elinor remarked to Lucile, as they sat together, "ordinary Sunday-school service is a mere perfunctory thing on the part of scholars and teachers, and has hardly any perceptible effect, but you can see the difference in Isabel's way. The boys know she is in earnest, and that she is really anxious to teach them the things they need to help them live — they are as glad to receive as she is to give."

"Yes, it is beautiful. I am so glad she has our boys. It is a great relief to me — who ought to have taught them as she does — but couldn't. I can't teach children. I want to help here, but I'd be a miserable failure at anything I've yet discovered."

"You might play the piano. Isabel asked me to do it, as they have no one at present. But father would not let me come here regularly, I think—though I am of no earthly use where I am, and growing more and more a mere formalist every day."

"I will do that, if they wish, though it is fearful drudgery, isn't it, to be obliged to come every Sunday. But Mr. Ray has made me feel for a little while, as if I should like to be a martyr. I could walk gracefully up to the stake if he were looking at me, I am sure. He simply gives off enthusiasm, doesn't he?"

"Have you heard how many other schemes he has on foot? Frank Dana was telling me they are legion, and we can all have a chance at our own pet work, if we will. He has contrived to enlist almost everybody in some department already, I believe. How delightful it is to see such a young man as Frank not ashamed to show he is on the right side, and to try to pull other young men of his class over to that side, too. And the boys all respect him for it, too — even when they don't follow him. He's a real manly fellow and they know it — no milksop who is good because he can't be anything else."

"Any one can be wicked, Elinor. It doesn't take much intellect to break all the commandments. But I know what you mean. I don't admire those pious frauds — you have seen — more than you do. But the sowing of wild oats is a very simple process, and requires less mental force than refraining. The harvesting of them is not so simple."

"Don't you remember when you used to say you liked a man who had a spice of *diablerie* about him, and couldn't bear a model young man?" said Elinor, with a laugh at the recollection.

"Yes; I was a very foolish and pert young miss, I think, a year or two ago. I made that remark once too often, and have

been ashamed of it ever since. Miss Weston overheard me and one day took occasion to tell me just what it signified. She told me just what the life of a fast young man was. I had never had anything but the most vague and shadowy idea before — simply that he was gay and festive. If girls only knew, as she made me know, what is meant by leading a fast life, I don't think they would be so willing to marry these fast young men. I'd as soon marry a leper, now."

"And I. There is no conceivable degradation that would be worse, I think, than living with one of these same fast men. My Aunt Mary has tried it, and she has enlightened me, as Miss Weston did you. She has been forced to leave her husband now, and my father cares for her."

"That is what every woman should do; if no decent woman would live a day with such a man, once she knew his status, the world would be the better off. Let the fast men live with their own kind. That's where they belong."

"Don't you think women are getting on to that ground?"

"Slowly. But I'd like to be an apostle to them of the new doctrine of Clean Lives. They can't live such lives with vicious men, and they have no right to try. The call to them is to come out from their debasing surroundings."

"You are tired, Isabel; let me take you around in the carriage," said Frank Dana, as the girls came out of the church, "and you, too," turning to Lucile and Elinor.

They all complied very willingly, and as they gaily seated themselves Herr Hardige came down the steps and glanced their way. He bowed and smiled, but with a sad and wistful look, which all noted, then walked away alone — and lonely.

"That man's face is as sad as Dante's," said Isabel. "I wish I knew how to put some brightness into it. It cuts me to the

heart every time I see it. Has he, too, been in the Inferno?"

"In the Inferno of pride, and rebellion against fate, I take it," said Frank. "He is more than morbid about his lameness, I'm told, and will not believe that people can regard him like other men — women particularly."

"What folly!" exclaimed Lucile, impetuously, "far better be crippled in the feet than in the head, or the heart — which is much more common."

"Mr. Ray says he is the equal of any gentleman he knows," said Isabel, "and I, for one, am extremely anxious to make a friend of him, but I don't know how."

"I shall indite a poem to his eyes," said Lucile, "and that will be sure to win him. All men are vain, and even this Jupiter would fall before flattery."

"His eyes are worthy of your best effort," said Isabel. "They look like wells into which one might fall."

"Look out, Isabel!" cried Frank, "you are just the one to be carried off your feet by a tragic fellow like the professor. I don't think I'll dare encourage your acquaintance with genius. You're too romantic."

"I romantic? Am I not known as the very embodiment of practical prose? And you know I hate young men, and always did."

"We can all testify to that fact!" cried the girls.

"Well, that is because you are romantic. There is nothing romantic about the average young man you see — far from it. He's a perfectly prosaic quantity. That's why you've allowed yourself to wickedly and maliciously despise him. Take me, for instance. If I wore a Spanish cloak and a big sombrero, let my hair curl on my shoulders and parted it in the middle, and looked fiercely repellant, or utterly despairing, you'd con-

sider my case—but now I'm only a common fellow in a business suit, and you laugh me to scorn."

Elinor smiled at all this nonsense, but took no part in the conversation, which was brought to a close by their arrival at Isabel's home, where Elinor also alighted. Then Frank and Lucile took the much longer ride to her home alone.

"How's the military youth?" was his first question when they were alone, asked with a quizzical smile.

"He's divine! I never read such splendid letters as he writes, and he has sent his photograph now."

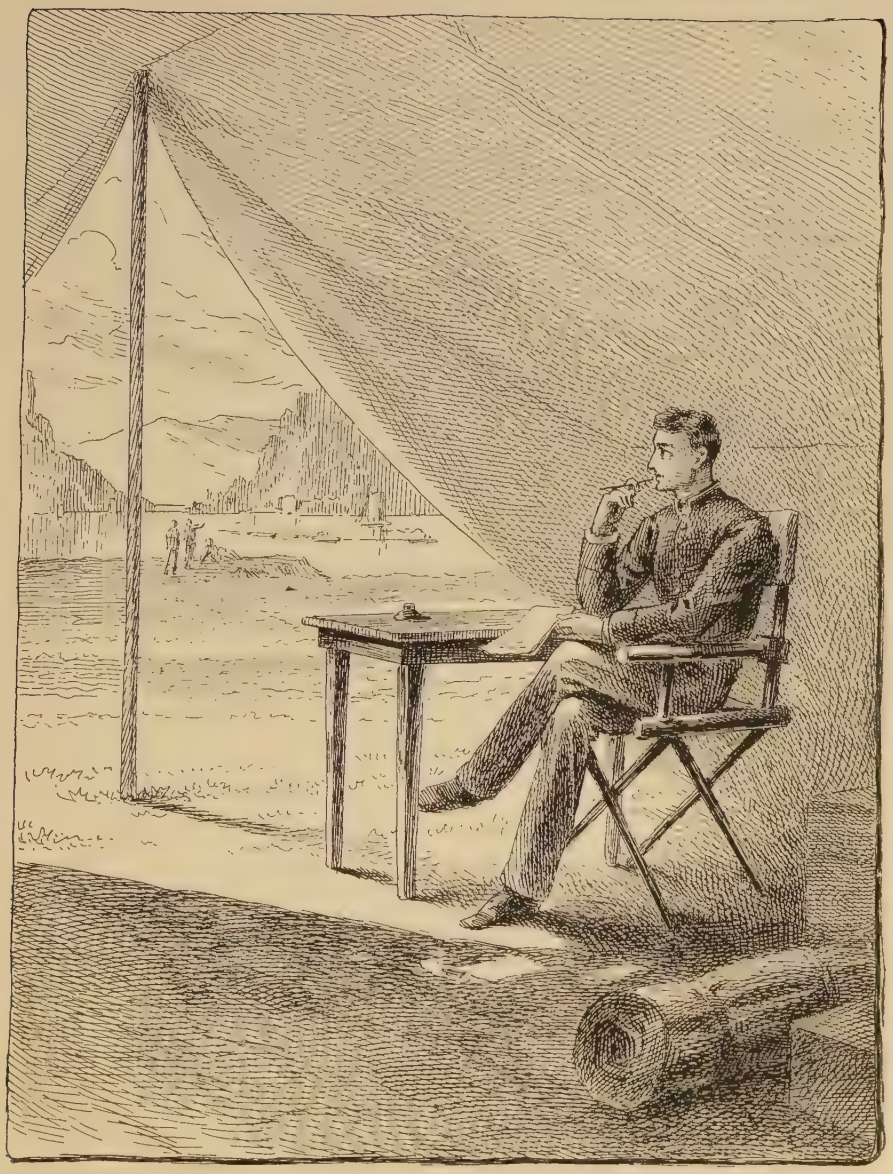
"Let me see it, for you doubtless wear it next your heart."

"Not exactly—though I own I am very fond of it. He's not remarkably handsome, but very intellectual looking, I think."

"I'll run in and see it. You can't take up with any strange youth without my consent, you know."

"Oh, I'm not thinking of taking up with him. I haven't got the chance. If he should propose to take me it would be a great load off my mind, for I don't know what to do with myself. This poetry business is not a financial success, and I'm on the verge of starvation."

Frank looked grave. He was used to her mocking speeches and to her exaggerations of her troubles, but he knew also that there was truth in all these over-wrought statements of her needs. He did not dare offer any personal assistance, and he did not see any way in which she could earn money. She saw his troubled look and hastened to laugh the cloud away—but he left her with a real anxiety at his heart. "Poor little thing," he kept thinking, "I should like to transplant her."



"IN ONE OF THE TENTS SITS A YOUNG MAN, WRITING."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Gentle, never schooled, and yet learned, full of noble device,
of all sorts enchantingly beloved."—*As You Like It.*

IT is a summer's morning at West Point — a place often called by enthusiastic travellers the loveliest spot in America. It is the season in which the military residents make their canvas houses in the open air, and repose at night on the bosom of mother earth, with the blue sky for a canopy. It is a clear, warm, delightful evening; the elm and maple leaves wave lightly to and fro in the breeze, and no sound is heard save the occasional chirping of birds, and the unceasing hum of the locusts that daily make the old mountains echo. Two hundred feet below rolls the noble Hudson, looking just as it did when Ichabod Crane rode along its banks toward the house of Van Tassel.

The view from this point is the finest on the river, and is a picture which no artist has yet succeeded in transferring to canvas, although many have tried. There is one blueness of the river, another of the sky, and another of the distant hills, and as you turn your eyes from one to the other, each seems more enchanting than the last. In one of the tents, overlooking the finest prospect of the place, sits a young man engaged in writing. A tall, straight, slender youth of twenty-two, who has already spent five years at the academy, and is so in love with the spot and the life led there, that he has never had a wish for

change. A hard student, he has made light of the required work, which is very hard for the majority of cadets, and has had time for general reading and for the writing in which he delights — letters to all sorts of people, at home and abroad.

Of old New England family, there is something of the Puritan about him, especially in his stern moral code, which is a continual wonder to his comrades. He has forced them to respect him, otherwise they would call him a prig or a fanatic— for he refuses to go their favorite ways in many things, and has a standard of his own to which he lives up, regardless of the standards of the place. Not companionable with all, for he has not time to win their good opinions, he is on terms of the closest friendship with a few of the best men of the place, and much esteemed by the officers resident here. He is romantic, poetical, and a great admirer of literary genius.

In a moment of enthusiasm he sent a letter to our little friend Lucile, concerning a scrap of her poetry; and her frank, pleased letter in answer, delighted him so much that for some months he has kept up the correspondence with unabated zeal. He has a great curiosity about this young girl, this mere child as he regards her, who writes those passionate, despairing little poems, full of such a weird, strange melody, and yet oftentimes so crude and unfinished, and who sends to all the papers, here and there, those brilliant, dashing letters, full of mocking sarcasm, which seem to emanate from a woman old and blasé in the ways of the world. She is a piquant study. He cannot make her out, but he owns her fascination, and keeps sending her letters, and awaiting her replies with absorbing interest. Thus far he does not approve of her at all. He finds fault with her continually in his letters, and seems determined to make her over into a proper and stereotyped young

lady — dimly perceiving all the time that if he could succeed, her charm would be entirely gone, and he would have no further interest in her. And yet she shocks him in every way. Her daring utterances upon all subjects, especially upon those of which she is most ignorant, her unconventionality, her contempt for the ways and opinions of the world he knows, her passionate, uncurbed feeling, her wild revolt at times against fate, her lack of religious opinion—all these things astonish and alarm him, and yet lure him on to ever-increasing interest in her personality and her fate. She writes to him as though she had known him from infancy; tells him of all the deepest problems of her existence in long, marvellously-written letters—letters wherein her genius shows far more resplendently than in anything she has yet published—and he replies in labored letters of advice and criticism, of questioning curiosity, occasionally of personal revealment.

The difference in their letters is the eternal difference between the mere cultivated man of letters, and the poet born—not made. He has had all the culture of the schools, has all models of good literature before him, and studies them carefully; she is a mere school-girl, with the most superficial training, and scanty reading of anything but poetry and romance: yet her letters have all the glow and abandon, the originality and charm, which he will never attain, strive he ever so earnestly. He knows it well, and appreciates them at their full worth, while still criticising them, one and all. Let us peer over his shoulder as he writes this morning:

MISS LUCILE:

I never supposed you capable of writing such a stupid letter as the one I have just received from you. If you made it so intentionally as a return for my imposing a political discussion upon you, all I have to say is, you had better not let me know it, for if you do I will revenge myself by writing out in full that essay on

religion which you so satirically invite me to do, and inflict every word of it on you, you sinner.

My political discourse was a clear, calm, condensed, and complete delineation of our national condition, with a moral either expressed or left implied--I forget which. And if you were bored and not benefitted by the valuable document, it is your loss and not mine. Now just look out for that sermon. A single *faux pas* and you catch it, from original sin down to new-school Presbyterianism. And if you provoke me too far I will send you a young library of all the Apostles, martyrs and doctors: Augustine, Calvin, Hugo Grotius and all, and you will have to read every word of it out of politeness. What an abominable letter yours was! That rhapsody on summer! Why, a Massachusetts school-girl of twelve would be kept on bread and water a week if she were to perpetrate such a thing. And then, to think you should put off such trash on me! Your remarks relative to women were very good but *old.* Almost every moral tale in a provincial newspaper contains something to the same effect.

Now, as to that last sketch of yours which I have recently read, I have another story to tell. It was only a short, passionate, enthusiastic sketch — something about love, Nahant, and the ocean. It occupied only a column in the paper, where I saw it, and yet it has impressed me more forcibly with a conviction of your wild, erratic, brilliant genius, than all the rest of your productions together. Child of Olympus! if you can write thus of love, a passion you have never felt; of the grand ocean, which you have never seen; what powers will be yours when time and experience shall have perfected them! I hate to praise you so. I would much prefer to criticise, but for once I must talk as I feel. Yours is no petty talent — you have the often fatal gift of genius.

How I pity you for being doomed to live year after year in a country without mountains. Were I doomed to live long without the sight of our beautiful hills I should pine away. No landscape can be very beautiful without them. Claude has indeed given us love scenes of streams and meadows and trees, with vine-enshrouded villas, and arched bridges interspersed. But their charm would fade away but for the pale blue mountainous outlines that rise in the far background. I was never so impressed with the unspeakable loveliness of our highlands as last evening. I stood with a friend by Hudson's shore, watching a light row-boat that was bringing over some ladies from the opposite side. The waves danced and laughed with the breeze, and the white-winged vessels glided swiftly over them, dashing the spray in showers from their bows; and far above them all, rising in bold succession toward the old Cro'-nest, where the culprit Fay once mounted his firefly steed, the darker Storm King and their lesser attendants. Over their cold, gray rocks clambered the mountain ivy, with its leaves turned to a brighter vermillion, and lower down the thick, clustering foliage of the maples blended with the dark pines and yellowing beach leaves. But the greatest charm of all was the flitting lights and shadows that a falling sun threw over their rugged sides, and the purple mist that hung above the valleys and crept up the wooded slopes. From four o'clock till sunset these transparent veils of mist

and long lines of shade and shadow played around the giants, and then disappeared in the all-enshrouding darkness.

Having abused you so much in this, dare I ever hope to see your quaint handwriting again? Well, I only wished to arouse you—sleeping beauty—for you really gave me of inferior quality in your last, and I can't stand that sort of thing, you know, after having been pampered by you so long. Be magnanimous, and give me of your best again, and send more poems, for without the poems I am lost.

Yours ever, ARTHUR.

After a few weeks have passed we might read this other:

AMIGA MIA:

Slightly too affectionate, that—unless you translate it literally, as you are at liberty to do if you wish. I feel quite like writing to you to-night, but much more like talking. Perhaps were we together we shouldn't talk much, for this night is too impressively, unspeakably lovely to be profaned by idle words, that convey but a small portion of the depth of feeling that such beauty will inspire. A thick, motionless curtain of green leaves folds itself silently before my open window, shutting out the view of all else save a small piece of greensward directly underneath, sparkling with its pure dew gems — but I have been out on the open plain, wandering with a happy crowd of dark uniforms and silken robes. Under some drooping elms near the precipice that overhangs the river, the band is playing most entrancing music, and while the melody made the still night air tremulous with harmony, and the very foliage apparently so enchanted by the soft sound and the magic picture of moonlight beauty around, that its leaves forgot to rustle, and the very breeze to whisper, we walked slowly for an hour along the motionless stream. The pale light of a full moon silvered over its transparent surface, save where winding by the base of Cro' nest and Storm King the shadows of the highland giants transformed it to clear ebony.

This scene of enchantment and the gay company I have left, partly because the hour waxes late — especially because this is the only opportunity I shall have for several days to answer your last kind letter. Even now the sweet strains of thirty instruments are uniting in beautiful concord in the plaintive "Sounds from Home," and the music rises and softly falls again on the still night, telling one in its sweet, sad strains, many a mournful tale of long ago. Presently the Dragoon Sergeant will sound the bugle, and after its own echoes have died away in the glens, all other sounds will cease, save perhaps, the occasional panting of the steam monsters that nightly wind their way to the great city below.

Then perhaps I shall write gaily to you, but just at present I feel a little sentimental. Perhaps it is due to your picture which has arrived since I last wrote, and stands before me on the desk. Why did you ever dare tell me you were not handsome, you provoking child? It comforted me to hear that you were plain, because I did not wish the beauty as well as the talent of this correspondence to be all on one side, as I had always entertained hopes that we might meet sometime, and then you could not conscientiously abuse me for not being an Apollo. But you deceived me most shame-

fully. Your face is absolutely beautiful, and yet I can't tell you where the charm is. I can only say that I love to look at it for long, long minutes, and yet the more I look the more it fascinates me. It seems trying to say something to me, but in strange, mysterious language that I do not, cannot understand. I know it doesn't do you justice — pictures never do—but it shows me that your face possesses that indescribable, incomprehensible *something*, that makes it divine as compared to the expressionless *nothing*, plainly apparent on the faces of many who believe themselves beautiful. Thank you a thousand times for the gift.

What you say of happiness calls for a serious word in closing. You have read how Arthur's knights sought for the Holy Grail, by land, by sea, and how the object of their quest was attained by Sir Galahad and others, by an untiring strife, not only with the physical obstacles to their mission, but with their own earthly natures. Each day they grew braver and nobler, and purer, till at last they were deemed fit to be admitted to the holy sanctuary, where was reposing the sacred relic, and where, in communion with pure spirits that watched around it, they passed their days till one by one their souls were borne aloft to share in bliss eternal. It has ever seemed to me that the most beautiful of all lives which we could lead, would be one in which we followed in the footsteps of those maiden knights — overcoming, like them, every adversary of the world, the flesh, and the devil, gradually purifying our natures of all their earthly dross, and finally becoming in literal truth a little lower than the angels. I believe that this is the only road to that mythical happiness which all men pursue from childhood to age, although a thousand other more alluring paths invite our footsteps, and charm our intellect or senses with their temporary fascination. This road is difficult to tread, my own experience tells me how very difficult, but increased strength will come with increasing years, I trust. The length of this is unpardonable, but when I write to you I know not where to stop. I wish to tell you everything.

Always,

ARTHUR.

In answer to the demand for poems came these two:

CAP AND BELLS.

We will touch thee lightly, life,
  Float upon thy crested waves;
Nor once dream that far below
  Dead men have their graves.
Life may hideous secrets have,
  Of them we will never guess,
Laugh and love, and, if men weep,
  Laugh and love no less.

We will live thee gaily, life,
  Brief thou art at very best;
Dance and sing, then sing and dance,
  At the end, we know, is rest.
Action's loudest trumpets blare,
  Mad reformers cymbals clash,
We will have our golden dreams,
  Not your conflicts rash.

We shall lose thee quickly, life,
  Mad and merry is our pace;
But we'll meet whate'er we find
  With a smiling face.
Laugh and love, oh brothers mine,
  Useless knowledge, useless fame,
Laugh and love, and, though we die,
  Laugh and love the same.

GWENDOLEN.

My lady Gwendolen would ride;
  The hounds are baying in the wood,
Her steed, with trappings white and gold,
  Champs at the door in restive mood.
She lingers on the winding stair,
  She watches as a page draws near,
From out his doubtlet's silken fold
  The longed-for missive comes to cheer.

Now gaily to the hounds away,
  "One royal day of life we'll name,"
She murmurs, while the bounding blood
  Courses through all her veins like flame.
An ecstacy of mad delight,
  Glorious, exultant, in her stirs;
All fear is gone; all caution fled—
  A day, one royal day, is hers.

Deep into the wood she rides— —
  Its shades are dark, its labyrinths dense;
The silence of its dusky aisles
  Is growing somber and intense;
She heeds it not; the eyes she seeks
  Will light for her the darkest place;
The voice she listens for will fill
  All voids within the arc of space.

In green and gold she rides to-day;
Her plumes are drooping to her waist;
Her velvet bodice, like a glove,
Fits the soft form by it embraced.
Her curls are tossing in the breeze,
Golden and soft as silken floss;
Two tiny jewelled daggers lie
Her bosom's beauteous lines across.

Sudden her wrapt face gleams and glows,
She hears afar a coming steed—
Her breath comes quick, her pulses throb,
Unto her way she gives no heed.
The winding path turns sharply now,
And on her, ere she is aware,
Her lord, with fury in his look,
Whose peaceful look is hard to bear.

A flash of steel—a nervous shriek—
A heavy fall, and, fold on fold,
Trailing 'mid tangled brake and broom,
My lady's habit green and gold;
While deeper in the deadly wood,
A knight lies prone, whose hands still press
A tiny note whose fateful lines,
Are circled by a golden tress.

A day or two after receiving the poems came a little note enclosing another, "just written," she said, "to show that she had reformed, and sent before he would have time to prepare the lecture regarding the others." It was called

ST. ANGELA.

No earthly lover have I known;
No breath from passion's dusky wings
Has swept my heart, and wakened there
Responsive tremblings in its strings.
I never knew the touch of hands
Thrilling along my veins like fire,
Within my silent soul has slept
All love, all passion, all desire.

The wisdom of the busy world
I never learned; the ways of men,
Their tortuous paths, their sordid needs,
Are all beyond my being's ken.
For I have sat with Christ apart,
And dreamed but of His loveliness,
To me the glory of His face
Has banished longing for the less.

He fills the midnight and the morn,
Constant, ineffable, serene,
The hush of His soft eyes would still
The mightiest tumult life has seen.
Floats to me music from His voice
Like echoes from the heavenly psalms,
And down into my still heart sinks
The silence of celestial calms.

Whene'er the censer swings I feel
His breath upon my pallid cheek,
When roll the organ notes I hear
His voice adown still spaces speak.
I tremble when the Host is raised,
For then I greet Him face to face:
Too great the glory, and I fall
Entranced before His matchless grace.

But in the cloister's stillest hour,
A dearer presence, dim, divine,
Steals sometimes on my waiting soul,
Which I feel mine, mine, only mine.
And then in raptured pain I hold
Him to my heart and melt away;
The world is gone, and heaven is mine,
Till on my eyes is forced the day.

Divinest raptures thrill my soul
For days, when such a glimpse is mine,
Of Him—the Bridegroom—whom I 'wait,
Lordly, ineffable, divine.
The stony floors grow soft as down,
The narrow cell expands like thought;
Eternity seems all too brief
For being with His own inwrought.

Oh! blessed Bridegroom I espouse,
One glimpse of Thee may well suffice
To fill this little space of time,
And satisfy these longing eyes.
One moment of Thy presence fills
The little remnant of my days;
Then clasped in Thy enfolding arms—
Eternity—for prayer and praise.

These poems, like the others he had read, affected Arthur Stanley profoundly. Here, it seemed to him, was a passionate, strong soul, beating against its limitations, and asking strange questions of life—dangerous questions—which must receive some answer, or the rebellious heart might be lost in despair or given over to folly. She needed a guide through the dark labyrinths of questioning and daring speculation upon which he felt she had entered, and he seemed to feel the great responsibility thrust upon him, who, in his ignorance of her real nature and life, felt so powerless to lead her aright. He answered her gravely, earnestly, and impressively, and received a reply in which she cast off her lightness, and showed him, in a womanly manner, her unrest and distrust, and feeling of being lost in the world. The correspondence took a deeper tone, and, though some of its early charm was lost to him from her changed mood, yet he was pleased that it should be so, as it indicated a deeper nature than he had suspected, and a possibility of his arousing in it greater ambitions, more earnest aspirations, and, withal, more conscientious artistic work, than he had at first dreamed. Often, in his long walks through the highlands, she went with him as a thought he could not banish—a thought that was sweet and welcome, yet disturbing.

CHAPTER IX.

"The world is still deceived with ornament."
—*Merchant of Venice.*

AS Mr. Ray came to get acquainted with his church, he found himself surrounded by a very attractive body of young people, all of whom were willing to become active workers, if he could point out to each his especial work. In some cases this was rather difficult to do, as no decided aptitude existed; in others, as Isabel Logan and Frank Dana, it was easy, as they had a natural bent and showed it. He soon learned to depend a great deal upon Frank, not only for work in his own department, but for sympathy, and aid, and suggestion everywhere. Frank was interested in everything, anxious to aid every good work, and had time and money at command. He had naturally that public spirit which it is so cheering to find in the young, and which it is so rare to find in young or old. He was willing to sacrifice for the public good, and to consider the public good before private gratification. He was an enthusiastic student of social science, also, and had more wisdom with his zeal than many beginners in good works. Mr. Ray found it a great relief to have one man at his side who understood, without being told, what he was striving to do, and the best methods of bringing about desired results. He soon came to depend upon him very much in all the practical working out of his schemes.

In Isabel Logan he found Frank's feminine counterpart, and she soon came to stand in much the same relation to the pastor that the young man did. She too was wise beyond her years in practical benevolence — studied the subject and knew the reasons for what she did and what she did not do. She, too, loved the public good, and was no narrow one-ideaed reformer, but had an open vision for the carrying out of reforms. There was also a strain of sternness in her nature, which was found very useful in keeping in check merely sentimental workers. She belonged to the committee of investigation into the needs and antecedents of all who sought aid from the benevolent society, and she had often need to repress with some of her sternness the unwise suggestions and recommendations of some of her co-workers. She believed in scientific charity, and not in indiscriminate alms-giving, and she fought the battle out somewhat hotly in the beginning of her church work — but was sustained loyally by Mr. Ray — all the time. That gentleman soon found it very pleasant to drop into the parlor of Mrs. Logan at very frequent intervals to consult with his *aide de camp* about all sorts of things, and he evidently had a very flattering opinion of her judgment, and of her love for good work — for he entrusted a good deal to her hands. There was, of course, some jesting in the church very soon, about the interest the young ladies took in church work when the pastor was young and unmarried, and this, coming as was natural to Isabel's ears, caused her exceeding pain and annoyance. She, of course, was but one of twenty who had taken up active work since the new departure in the church, but she took the criticism all to herself, and found herself more vexed and hampered by it than she had thought possible when she first heard the foolish remarks. She showed it by treating Mr. Ray almost with rudeness, everywhere when the

eyes of the church were upon her. She avoided him so pointedly that he was quite hurt, and thought he must have offended her, and she gave up consulting him about many things upon which she really wished his opinion. Isabel's pride was of the sternest kind, and she held all young men at the coldest distance, from somewhat the same reason that she avoided Mr. Ray—she feared they might think she sought them, if she treated them with any approach to cordiality. When Mr. Ray called at her house she was as cordial and helpful as ever—for she had no fears of his misunderstanding her—but in all church work she kept at as great a distance from him personally as possible.

Quite unlike this was the action of many of the young ladies of the society, and especially so that of Imogene Willis, a beauty and a flirt, some years older than Isabel, who seemed to have taken a violent fancy to the young minister. He found her at his side upon all occasions. She wanted advice, assistance, co-operation, in all things, and could do nothing unless Mr. Ray helped her. She was one of those soft, supple, child-faced women, whose laughing blue eyes, with their long fringed lids, do such execution upon manly hearts. Her tawny hair was a mesh of enchantment, apparently, for it snared many victims, and her infantile caressing ways held many that the physical chains had caught. She had a soft, languorous way, and a low, sweet voice, and shrewdness and practical sense, if not intellect, as some asserted. She was certainly at the antipodes of an intellectual woman, and knew almost nothing of books, or the realm of ideas, but she had great practical sense in managing men, and even women. Dress was the fine art to which she devoted herself, and she made a good deal of a success of her specialty. It was her one real interest in life. All other things were accidental —this was fundamental. She lived, moved, and had her being

in dress, and in a world where people were not clothed she would have had no reason for existing. Her waking and sleeping dreams alike were of toilets, and to excel all others in the attractiveness of her dress, her highest earthly ambition.

But she had much skill in disguising her worldliness and frivolity, and affected the sweetest interest in everyone with whom she came in contact. She endeavored to make everyone feel that she had an especial interest in and liking for them, and she succeeded in the majority of cases, and was popular everywhere. She also affected humility, and disarmed much criticism by disclaiming all learning, all influence, all charm. She had, withal, a kind heart and many generous impulses, and was one of the most popular young ladies in society. Church work was for the moment her ruling whim, and it became rather a wearisome one to her friends, for she had zeal without discretion many times. She was a thorn in Isabel's side which irritated her sorely. She violated every scientific principle in her bungling efforts at charitable work, and was continually pauperizing those whom Isabel was laboriously striving to render self-supporting and independent, by giving them things they did not need, and encouraging that idea of getting something for nothing, which is the bane of almost every poor family who have once received charity.

Isabel became so annoyed by this in one case that she spoke of it to Mr. Ray: "Miss Willis is undoing all my work with the family of Mrs. Lucas, Mr. Ray. I had just got them where they could take care of themselves, and expected to do so, for I told them we could aid them with nothing but work, and they had accepted the situation, and were all provided with places, when Miss Willis goes around there with a lot of finery, utterly unfit for those girls — her own clothing, which you can see at a glance could not be properly worn by them — gives it to them,

stirs their vanity, makes them discontented with the kind of clothing they can earn for themselves, and demoralizes them generally. I am so disturbed about it that I really do not know what to do. I don't think I can ever regain my hold upon them. They think it is so much nicer to have a visitor like Miss Willis."

"It is extremely unfortunate, certainly," said Mr. Ray, "and I will talk to Miss Willis about it, and try to make her understand that that is the worst way in the world to help the poor; and you, meantime, keep up your visits to them, if you please, and try and recover lost ground. Arouse their pride; it is the best safeguard the poor have."

"And Mr. Ray, if possible, I wish you would change her on to some other committee; I don't think I can work with her, because our ideas are so radically different. Give her some old people, or helpless dependents of some kind, who can't work, and let her give them as much as she pleases; but don't let her spoil my able-bodied young people."

"Well, I will try to do that. Is it not strange that all over the world, and in every generation, workers among the poor find this same trouble? Over a hundred years ago, in Hamburg, where scientific charity really was tried for the first time, this foolishness of private charity, and the refusal of the churches to co-operate with the central organization, was one of the greatest obstacles they had to overcome. They were very wise in Hamburg as long ago as that, and nearly every one of our latest ideas was in the minds of the founders of the Hamburg institution."

"It seems to be quite an impossibility to originate anything in the world at the present day."

"I sometimes think I find original forms of wickedness; but I presume they could all have been duplicated, even among the antediluvians."

"By the way, how do you get on with Herr Hardige, Mr. Ray?"

"Oh, capitally. We are getting to be close friends. I find him the best and most exciting of company, and he evidently enjoys me as well as I do him."

"That is very delightful. I am so glad the poor man has found a congenial friend. I think he needed it as much as a man could."

"Doubtless. He was utterly alone and almost in despair, he has told me."

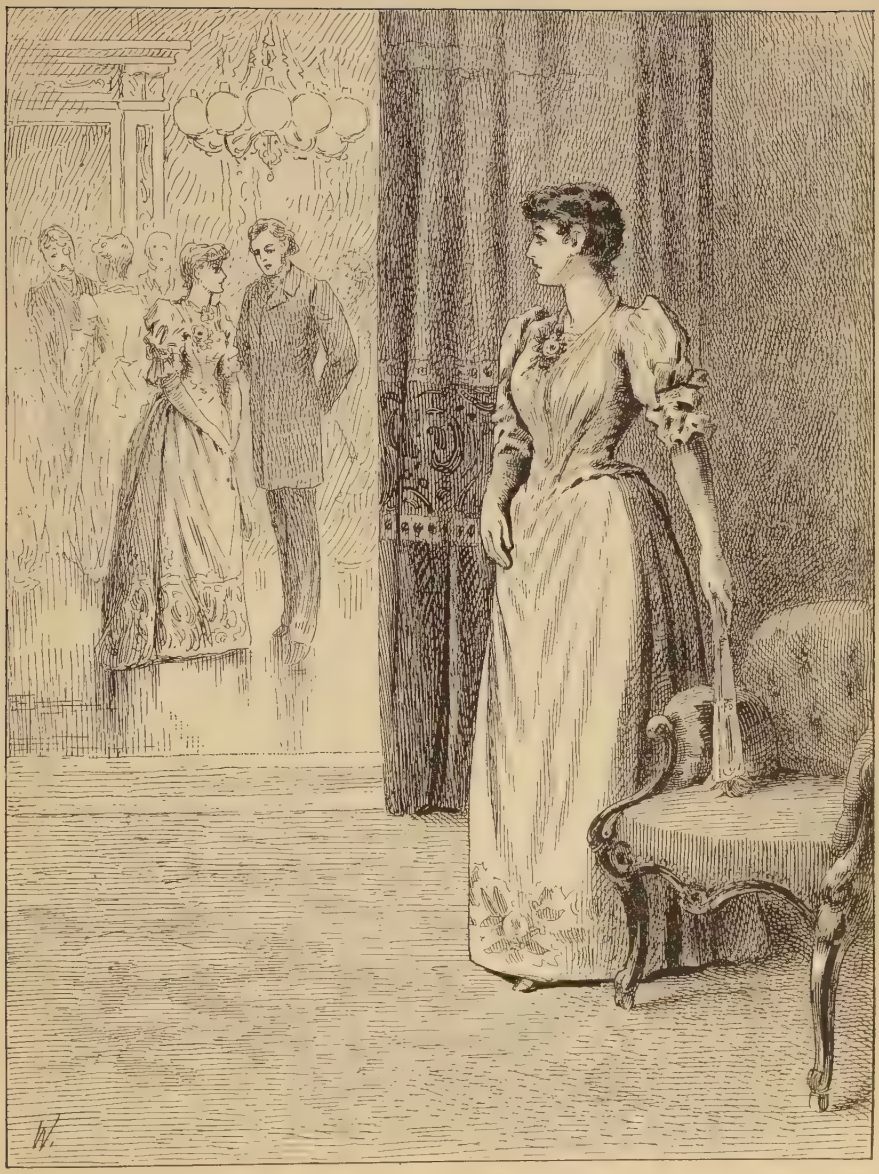
"I want to know him, too; but he is so very unconventional, I don't suppose he could be persuaded to come with you and make a call. I have implored Elinor Lewis in vain to bring him to see me. She says she wouldn't dare hint at such a thing. Is he such an ogre?"

"He is very warm-hearted and companionable, I think; but Miss Lewis knows him only as a teacher, I presume, and would not care to change the status."

"Very probably; but she has a warm admiration for him, I am sure."

"I will manage to bring him to see you. You would be very stimulating to him, I'm sure. He has known but two classes of women: the fine ladies who condescended to him in Germany, and the mothers of his pupils here, who know nothing of music, and exasperated him to frenzy. I don't know which class he hates the most."

"It would doubtless do him good, then, to meet some ladies as equals. That is the way I should meet him, I am sure. I see no reason for any condescension. He is a gentleman, and should be received on his merits."



"ISABEL KEPT HERSELF AT THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE ROOM."

"Most certainly. He would like to know your little friend, Miss Layton, I think. He has read me her poems two or three times, and has a great admiration for her genius."

"I wonder if he would come some evening with Lucile, the Danas, and Elinor Lewis. If you could bring him, we would have music, and a nice visit, I think."

"I will ask him. It would be very pleasant for us all."

After Mr. Ray had left her, Isabel had a time of sore repentance over what she had said to him of Imogene Willis, and was very miserable; but she comforted herself at last by thinking that in no other way could she have hoped to stop the unwise action of that young person among her charges, and that it must be stopped, at all hazards, if she was to effect any permanent good. The three met at an evening party that night, and Isabel kept herself assiduously at the farthest corner of the room when she saw, with great disgust, how Miss Willis hovered around Mr. Ray like his shadow, and how coquettishly she smiled and cast down her eyes whenever he looked at her or spoke. Like other men, he was evidently flattered at her unconcealed preference, and somewhat captivated by her wiles; and Isabel began to doubt if he had more strength than the many other men who had yielded to her fascinations. If he did yield, Isabel would certainly despise him. It would be impossible for her to make any excuse for a man—a man of intellect, too—who could be lured on by so pronounced a flirt as Imogene Willis. It was infinitely humiliating, she thought; and her poor opinion of mankind was wonderfully fortified.

"When would you like that visit, Miss Logan?" said Mr. Ray, as Isabel descended the stairs ready to go home. "Herr Hardige will be happy to come at any time."

"Well, I will see when I can get the others, and let you know. I am delighted with your success."

Mr. Ray attended her to the carriage, and, giving her his hand, said: "I have scarcely seen you this evening. You are very unapproachable, I think."

"You were in such good demand that I think you could hardly have missed me; besides, I don't very well like to do my visiting with my friends in the eyes of the world. We'll make up for it when that famous evening comes around."

"She is very proud or very cold, I don't know which," thought Mr. Ray, as she drove away. But she is very entertaining when she allows herself to be natural." He was smiled upon sweetly by Miss Willis when he re-entered the parlor, but he did not again seek her side, though half inclined to do so.

Such homage as women like her render to men is very seductive. It is hard to resist the invitation of their eyes, the softness of their speech, and the deference of their conversation. The flattery of it all is intoxicating, and the graver the man—the more studious and thoughtful—the easier he is tempted many times. It is the spell of Vivien over Merlin repeated in a more subtle guise. This apparent yielding of oneself, unsought, from the mere force of strong attraction, has a certain charm to the highest natures, who are too innocent to be suspicious; while it would certainly repel the more worldly among men. She loves me: how can I, then, refuse to give her my heart? is the inward argument—never formulated in words, perhaps, but powerful still—in their minds. Some men marry wives in this way, and are even held by them through life, if the womanly charm holds out, the beauty does not fade, and the caressing manner is natural and not assumed.

But far oftener, if a man of intellect yields to the temptation to marry a brainless doll, at the close of the honeymoon he wearies of her inanity, and goes unsatisfied throughout life, if he does not, as many do, seek for intellectual companionship elsewhere. The experiment of intellect allying itself with folly is a very hazardous one indeed, as the world goes.

Mr. Ray had known but little of women. Brought up by a somewhat stern and careful mother almost alone, having no sisters, and not even girl companions in childhood, he had, during his college life and in the theological seminary, lived almost the life of a recluse, mingling scarcely at all in the society of either place. He had not been long in the ministry, but was, of course, obliged to see a good deal of women as soon as he became a pastor. But he was still new to their life; he did not at all understand their ways or feelings, and was fitted to become the dupe of the first designing one who thought it worth while to attract him, because of his exaggerated opinion of their sincerity and high-mindedness.

He was a keen judge of men, however, and would in time become so of women; but at present he might easily be deceived by a scheming or worldly woman; and his dreams to-night are of Imogene Willis, and her languorous eyes and tawny hair.

CHAPTER X.

"Go to your bosom ;
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know."
—*Measure for Measure.*

ALL the little company which Isabel Logan invited for a certain evening that week felt themselves somewhat excited over the very commonplace event. She herself was, perhaps, not the least so, much to her own surprise. So small an affair as half a dozen friends coming to spend an evening was not wont to stir Isabel's veins in the least, although she had never entertained much company as yet, not caring for society in a general way, and having but few intimates. But she felt a sort of anticipatory glow of pleasure all day, and was agreeably excited when evening came.

Elinor Lewis also had felt unusually stirred by the prospect of this evening's visit. Much more fond of society and accustomed to it than Isabel, yet few occasions in her social life had so engrossed her thoughts for the whole day as this. She found herself wondering how her musical friend would acquit himself, whether he would treat them all with savage scorn, or would lay his armor by; whether or not he would be at ease, and how he would like Lucile and Gertrude, whom he had never met. She fancied he might be greatly attracted by Lucile, who was the only member of the party who could be suspected of the gift of genius anything akin to his own. Gertrude was very

beautiful, in the grand tragic style which she fancied he might admire, and he might be more pleased with her than with Lucile. Isabel would make friends with him, no doubt, if she tried, but he did not much like intellectual women, she suspected; he would enjoy conversing with Isabel, but would not feel differently toward her from what he did toward Mr. Ray, she settled in her own mind.

As evening approached she dressed herself plainly, but in a most becoming dress, and felt more excited than at her coming-out ball, she thought. Lucile, too, was somewhat elated over the prospect of this visit, but she had so little society that it was quite natural she should be so; and Francis Dana was not surprised to be greeted with great enthusiasm, when he called for her with the carriage at an early hour. Gertrude, perhaps, was the least interested party, but she always enjoyed her friends, and thought all these people would be delightful to know. Herr Hardige had repented a thousand times his acceptance of this invitation. He absolutely dreaded to go and Mr. Ray had much difficulty in getting him started, although he had the strongest desire to meet some of those who would be present. He had been disturbed all day by these conflicting feelings, and was almost in a mood of desperation when he reached the house.

"You would not let me run away?" he inquired of Mr. Ray, as they climbed the steps.

"Not I; screw up your courage to the sticking point."

"I had rather face a masked battery, I think."

"They are rather a dangerous lot of ladies, I think, but here goes," as he rang the bell. The company was all there when they entered, but you would never have suspected Herr Hardige of being intimidated. He greeted all with perfect grace and

cordiality, and Mr. Ray himself did not seem more at ease. Elinor received him graciously and with a certain deference, and he seated himself beside her in the circle which was gathered about the glowing grate, for the evenings were now chilly. On his other hand was Lucile, looking very pretty to-night and holding a bouquet which Gertrude had presented her, though Frank had been at the trouble of cutting and arranging it.

"I have read your beautiful verses, Miss Layton," the musician remarked, "and I am much honored to know one who writes so well."

"And I have heard your beautiful music once or twice, Herr Hardige, and have never been able to forget it. Music is capable of giving much more pleasure than poetry."

"The pleasure is the same, I think, when we are really moved by the poetry. I am in an ecstacy of admiration always at fine poetry; it thrills me—stirs my soul—and makes me forget myself. Music does that, too, but nothing else."

"Not even stirring companionship? That carries me out of myself in the same manner."

"I so seldom have known that—I cannot say."

"You have been unfortunate, I fear. I find many people stirring. In fact, anything approaching good companionship stimulates me. I am very easily made happy."

"You are much to be envied. I am very easily made unhappy. A very bad Fate presided over my birth. How is it with you, Miss Lewis?" and he turned his eyes upon Elinor.

"I have never been unhappy, I think; but music adds to my capacity of enjoyment five-fold, I believe. I seem to expand under it, and to soar above my ordinary self."

"And poetry?"

"I don't think I have the highest appreciation of poetry. I admire, but am not much moved by it."

"I think I have seen you moved by some poetry. You do yourself injustice, I am sure; and you will feel it deeper some time. You are too young to be moved by the highest poetry. And companionship?"

"Oh, I am somewhat excited by pleasant society, I suppose, but not moved as by music. I think that would be quite impossible."

"Not if you had the right companionship. I can imagine you stirred beyond the power of music."

Elinor felt quite embarrassed at all this personal talk, and flushed at this last remark, but did not dare to change the subject abruptly, for fear of hurting one so sensitive as the professor. Lucile saw her dilemma, and came to the rescue with some question about poetry, which launched them in a long conversation; and Elinor began a chat with Gertrude, who was beside her. Mr. Ray and Isabel were deep in a conversation which was both witty and wise, apparently; for Frank Dana sat listening with much amusement, and occasionally joined in.

Isabel was in a brilliant mood to-night, and flashed diamonds everywhere. Even the girls who knew her so well had never seen her so sparkling and vivacious, and looked at her in some astonishment.

"The idea that Isabel does not enjoy society," said Elinor to Gertrude. "There isn't one among us who gets half as much stirred with it as she. I venture to say she won't sleep for hours after we go to-night. Doesn't a very interesting company excite you that way?"

"Oh, we always lay it all to the coffee, but I suspect it is the company quite as much. You know we are not really awake

much of the time. When we are really aroused, we live so much faster." The circle by the fire now broke up, and the company re-arranged itself.

This time Lucile motioned Frank to her side. "Come and rest me," she whispered. "My intellect will give out if it is strained too far. You and I are always comfortable together."

"You are getting indolent, and don't like to exert yourself. I don't think it a great compliment to be called in as a relief from over-strain. What do you take me for, when you propose to bestow only the remnant of your intellect upon me?"

"For a much more agreeable person than any genius. I don't like to soar, except on paper. You and I always have plenty of things to talk about."

"Well, what is the latest news from the army?"

"Oh, Sir Arthur is getting prosy. He don't scold me or rake me with hot shot and shell any more — just reasons with me seriously — and it's monotonous."

"Truly! Don't you dream of uniforms and bugles, of case-mates and charges of light brigades any more?"

"No; I think the glamour is rather passing away. He's too serious-minded for me, I think. I get enough of the serious side of life at home, you know. I like to be carried away out of it by the people I have to do with. I need an elixir. There isn't a thing exhilarating about the knight, I fancy. There's a good deal of foam and froth about me, and I like a little fizz in my companion, also."

"You would wake him up, if he were not a thousand miles away. How do you like Mr. Ray?"

"The most astonishing of divines. He looks like a gambler, and preaches like the angel Gabriel, I think; though I have

rather vague ideas of how that old party would preach, I must confess."

She smiled the mocking little smile which always accompanied her shocking speeches, and said: "Really, I didn't mean to. I am truly reforming under his preaching, and seldom say anything wicked now. It must be your atmosphere which brings it out. I think he is gone on Isabel."

"Gone! Why, Lucile, I'm shocked. You foreswore slang six months ago, and now you've relapsed. I shall cut your acquaintance, really, if you persist in such atrocities as that."

"I won't. I'm quite ashamed; but, really, some slang is so very expressive and to the point. What could I have said there half so succinct and understandable as that?"

"But I've heard it remarked he was much pleased with Imogene Willis. How is that?"

"Can he be a flirt, with all his other graces and anomalies?"

"Not he, you may be sure."

"He is perfectly fascinating. I wonder at myself all the time why I don't fall down and worship like the rest. I think my heart must be turning to stone. It was not wont to behave so, I assure you."

"Oh, you would fall soon enough now, if he once smiled on you in any particular manner. You know the thing is hopeless, and so restrain yourself."

"That must be it. I'm glad to have it explained. One doesn't really like to become ossified at eighteen."

"You've dissipated your heart on imaginary lovers. I don't think you have the genuine article left at all. It has all been wasted on false loves and mock heroes in print."

"It is fortunate for me as far as Mr. Ray is concerned, I am sure. He would never fancy a wicked little wretch like me.

He recognizes me for the miscreant I am, already, I am sure. I expect to have him hand me a tract every time I meet him. Isn't there one called 'A Call to the Unconverted?' He's probably got it in his pocket now, and only awaits a fitting opportunity. Don't desert me; save me from the saints at all hazards."

"The professor looks wicked enough. I should think you would enter into a league with him right away. I'm surprised at your letting Elinor have it all to herself that way. See how very interested they are. They don't know there's another person here. Poor Gertrude, she might as well be in Dahomey, for anything those two couples know of her existence. We really ought to rescue her, but—"

"But what?"

"Well, I like the tete-a-tete plan remarkably well myself, and hate to spoil three such happy pairs. Let's sacrifice Gertrude for the good of the majority."

"If we only had Sir Arthur here. She admires him immensely. I show her all the letters, and she wonders at my insensibility. She thinks them wonderful, and so do I, for that matter."

"Don't harrow me with Sir Arthur again—just when I begin to get comfortable. You told me you were sick of him."

"Beg pardon, but did I?"

"The same thing. But I know you do admire him, and I predict you'll fall at his feet the moment you see him."

"Shouldn't wonder at all. I rather suspect I shall myself. I confess I'm remarkably anxious for his letters—though, as I said, they are truly getting monotonous."

"When will he be out?"

"Next summer, he says. It's an endless time, and only letters will bridge the aching void.

'Fly swifter round, ye wheels of time, and bring the welcome day.'"

She hummed these words to the familiar tune, and attracted Gertrude's attention, then motioned her to come over to the sofa where they sat. This movement recalled the others to themselves, and Isabel arose and suggested it was time for the promised music. Herr Hardige was very willing to play, and all sat in rapt enjoyment of his music for a long time. Isabel now changed her seat, but Mr. Ray had arisen, and was again seated by her. Elinor sat apart, and gazed into the coals, noticing no one. Frank retained his seat by Lucile, and all were busy with bewildering thoughts as the tide of music swelled. It revealed much to some of them. Gertrude was the only indifferent one, and she was a child yet at heart. Even she felt the passion in the music, and felt strange feelings stir in her unaccustomed heart; and a vague longing and unrest began to replace her youthful calm. All the rest felt their own undefined feelings taking form, and began to ask the question to themselves: What is the music saying — what sweet new thing is this? Elinor's cheeks blazed scarlet; Lucile was busy wiping away her tears, and the cool, calm Isabel had a hectic spot on each cheek when he had done. It was hard to come back to the everyday world again after that flight in the clouds, and it was Gertrude who saved the day by her womanly tact; all the others were too much moved.

It was a relief to go into the dining-room and praise the coffee and discuss the salad; a relief even to break up and go away, though this was done reluctantly. But the high tide of the evening had risen, and must now ebb inevitably; and it was best to go before commonplaces had become unbearable.

Gertrude offering to take Elinor home in the carriage, they all set out after many cordial adieux, and, as they rode along,

discussed the pleasures of the evening. At least Frank and Lucile and Gertrude did so, but Elinor was noticeably silent.

"How I would like to take you all to the opera next week," Frank finally said, when the former theme was exhausted. "I wonder if you'd all go in a party?"

"I shall need no second invitation," cried Lucile. "I would sell my birthright to hear 'Lohengrin' once more, and you are my only hope."

"Well, you shall go anyway, Dame Durden. Gertrude never refuses. How about Elinor?"

"Of course I should be charmed to go with you three, but about the party — if it includes all the others — I do not know. I do not think my father would be willing — perhaps. But would Mr. Ray visit the opera?"

"Certainly. You may be sure he will hear 'Lohengrin,' if any man in Chicago does," answered Frank.

"Oh, Elinor, do come. Don't be so proud. The professor is divine, I am sure; and we should have such splendid fun," cried Lucile, in a rapture.

"We could have the party without Herr Hardige," suggested Gertrude. "But half the charm would be lost without his vivid personality. I would rather hear 'Lohengrin,' with him in the box, than any other person I ever knew."

"And I, too," cried Lucile. "It would be really electrical, I'm sure. I almost feel the current now. Oh, do let us have the professor, Elinor."

"My dear, I have no objection, as you might know, to your having him in your party. He would add greatly to its interest, I should think. You would be just even numbers without me, though I will gladly come if father will allow."

There was nothing more to be said, and they dropped her at her door and drove on.

"I think she will come; don't you?" said Lucile.

"Hardly," said Gertrude. "You know her father is very particular, indeed; and this music-teacher will hardly do, I fancy."

"Don't you think she wants to come?"

"That is hard to say. Sometimes I think she is more interested in him than she knows herself. But she is too proud, I think, to yield to her feeling — if she has any."

"I tremble for the poor fellow," said Frank; "for it is quite plain to be seen that he plays to her, and to her alone; and that all that wild, haunting music to-night came from his stormy soul. It is strange, too, I think, that Elinor is so cold."

"Elinor is far from cold, Frank. You were never more mistaken," answered Gertrude. "But it is natural enough that she should withstand such a feeling in a man like Herr Hardige. I do not wonder at it at all, I am sure. These men of genius are not desirable either as lovers or husbands, I suspect."

"No, nor women of genius either, are they, Lucile? I rather pity the young military man myself, with such a stormy life in prospect."

"You are only envious," cried Gertrude. "You envy him, and I her. He is my beau ideal."

"I'll make him over to you for a small consideration. I fear he is too good for me," said Lucile.

"Well, Lucile, we'll consider it an engagement for the opera Tuesday evening," said Frank, as he helped her from the carriage, "whether the rest go or not;" and as he went up the steps with her "don't dream of the epaulets to-night," with a slight emphasis on the last word.

"Only of the music to-night, and that that is to be," she answered. Nevertheless, she did read over more than once a letter she found on her table, and thought for a long time about its writer so far away and so unknown; for she realized that she got little idea of the real man from the letters, as she knew that he had only the most shadowy and unreal picture of her from her own. But he was a romantic figure for her imagination to play upon, set in most picturesque surroundings, and a glamour she would hardly acknowledge hung over him. She thought about him at almost all times and places, waited anxiously for his letters, and was beginning to try very hard to please him.

This it was very difficult for her to do, she found, if she was at all natural. Every real characteristic of her nature seemed at variance with his. She could easily affect to be what he would like, she knew that, but she was far too honest and genuine to do that, so she revealed her real self, and was hardly ever fully approved by her critical mentor, who, it sometimes seemed to her, would not let her alone, and would not be pleased with her. But she was conscious of improvement under the discipline, and tried to let that suffice.

Mr. Ray and Herr Hardige lingered a little after the others were gone, and expressed great pleasure in the meeting of all these friends.

"I hope you will come to us again, Herr Hardige," said Isabel. 'I should much like to repeat the experiment."

"Never repeat a success, Miss Logan, is the saying; and I'm sure you would never get quite the fine aroma from another party you have gotten from this. But I'll assist you any time you like to try," he added with a smile; "and may I some time come without these friends, particularly without the minister,"

"AND THOUGHT ABOUT THE WRITER—FAR AWAY."

with a shrug in his direction "or do you always employ a chaplain at your parties?"

"It is necessary, sometimes," cried Mr. Ray, "when she has a particularly hard set, to bring up the average. But you may come alone for all of me, and I'll come alone myself after this. Miss Logan and I can get on well enough without you, can't we?" turning to Isabel.

"Oh, but we should miss the music in that case."

"I'll play myself, if it is necessary to have a band as well as a chaplain."

Then they went laughingly away, and Isabel sat down before the fire alone. What a pleasant whirl her thoughts were in. It was late, but she had no idea of going to bed — was never so wide awake in her life, she thought, and wished that the evening might have lasted longer. It had all been very pleasant, except that Gertrude had been left a little alone. That was not right, but who would have suspected that the company would prefer to visit in pairs? She wondered if Frank Dana was not getting a little bit in love with Lucile, through all this seeing to her and sympathizing with her hard fortunes. She had never thought of it before. Frank was like a brother to them all, and had treated Lucile like the rest; that is, until now. Was there something different now? She could not quite decide. Gertrude would be pleased, she thought, for she was so devoted to Lucile; but his parents — she had many doubts about them. Frank was the only son, and the idol of the house. How about Lucile? She was not a bit in love with Frank, she knew that well enough; but would she marry him if he desired? With her hard lot and poor prospects Isabel thought she might; but perhaps Frank had no wish for that. So she dreamed on while the embers glowed

before her, dreaming of many things, as girls do at such times.

Meantime Elinor sat before the fire in her own room, sleepless also, and seeing visions in the coals. She had taken down her hair, and thrown on a soft blue dressing gown, and was a picture as she sat there. The soft color still lingered in her cheeks, her lips were parted, her eyes downcast, and she smiled unconsciously as she, too, dreamed. The spell of the music was still upon her; the strains seemed echoing in her brain, and soft minor melodies were inwoven with all her thoughts, which were sweet but vague. The whole evening seemed like a dream — one of those subtly sweet, but half-defined visions of the night which come to us all — which we can never really remember, but which leave a happy glow in the heart, and a pleasant odor in memory. Would she go to the opera party? She could manage her father if she chose, she thought, but would she go? Did she want to go? Would it not be better, far better, to pause just here; to keep this much of this new sweetness in life, but to have no more? She could not decide to-night. Let it all go over into the to-morrow. Sufficient unto the day is the sweetness thereof. She wanted to go down into the library and play some of those strains which so haunted her. She did not think she could banish them in any other way. Could she in that, or would they abide with her forever — become a part of her conscious existence, and follow her while life lasted? She almost felt that they would. The eyes of the player, too, as he came toward her from the piano — would she ever forget them — those glowing, luminous eyes — filled to their depths with the passion and the pain of the music, of the thoughts which had given birth to the music? No, it was certain she would never forget the eyes — never forget the face — never

banish the memory of the music. To what would it all lead?

She did not answer this question even to her inmost soul. Let it remain unanswered — unasked, if she could have it so — but leave her alone with this sweet, new life which was surging in her veins — with this enchantment which had suddenly enshrouded her. Leave her to her dreams — to her dreams.

CHAPTER XI.

"What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide." *Henry VI., Part 3.*

ALL of the opera party had at last accepted their invitations, Elinor's coming last. Lucile had, of course, accepted on the spot enthusiastically; Isabel readily and with sincere pleasure, which she expressed; Mr. Ray a little hesitatingly—not but what he meant to hear the opera, but thought, perhaps, it would be better to go by himself quietly; but Frank had persuaded him that he was his own man, even if he was a minister, and at liberty to enjoy a pleasant party like any one else; for he had prefaced his answer with the assurance that in no way should he enjoy the music so well as in such company.

Herr Hardige and Elinor had both hesitated, he having no hesitation if sure that she were going, she having none if he were not going, but doubtful, if he did accept. Mrs. Dana was to go as chaperon. When all was finally arranged, the evening was awaited with much impatience by all. Youth is always impatient, and cannot wait for its pleasures. If it were wise, with the wisdom of its elders, it would linger long in the sweet, undefined borderland of love, instead of rushing so impatiently into the full glare of the world's light; but something always hurries it on; it likes no concealment—no half revelation—it wants the full assurance, and then possession. Sometimes it regrets its own success, and finds the full-blown odor of the rose not

half so precious as the shy, half-hidden fragrance of the bud.

The girls had managed Lucile's toilet according to their own desires. She had fortunately had a birthday during the week, and they were always accustomed to exchange presents on those days. So one had sent a lovely yet useful dress, another a bonnet also chosen for use as well as ornament, and the other a handsome wrap. Frank had sent a fan and flowers, and behold, she was radiant, and all the friends happy. Lucile had cried a little when the gifts came, and felt a little wounded, perhaps, not at her friends for sending, but that Destiny had denied her such goods in her own right. But she was too warm-hearted and sweet-natured not to take gifts in the spirit which real friendship demanded—and she realized that had fortunes been reversed, she should have had the greatest pleasure in so dealing with another. So this evening, when they were all assembled at Mrs. Dana's, she showed off her new things to the girls with childish delight, and hugged and kissed them all over and over again in her rapture.

"Really, they are too sweet for anything," she kept saying, "and I'm so very handsome and elegant I don't know myself, positively. I think I'm Diana of the Ephesians, or Cleopatra in her barge, or Solomon in all his glory, or some of the rest. What does stand for magnificence, anyhow, and royal splendor and all that?"

"Purple and fine linen," suggested Isabel.

"Yes; that is just the thing—that's the way I'm robed, and I fare sumptuously every day, at the expense of my friends. And I like it, too. I never did have the slightest taste for poverty and self-denial. This rolling in wealth suits me exactly. I shall try and complete my conquest of Mr. Ray to-night," and

she rolled her eyes solemnly at Isabel; "and if I can really capture a minister, why I may roll in wealth to my heart's content forevermore, I suppose."

"And we'll all come when you have a donation," said Gertrude, "and join your sewing society, and help along generally."

"I shall enjoy being president of one of the Lord's crocheting clubs, I think, as much as any part of my duties. It must be exhilarating. Don't you think so, Isabel?" and she glanced at her wildly over her spectacles.

"But what will become of the commander-in-chief?" said Isabel.

"Oh, I shall leave him to Gertrude. She has got to be provided for somehow, you know. We can't have her raging around among all our households in maiden meditation fancy free. She would make us trouble."

"I am rather fond of ministers, myself," said Gertrude. "Perhaps I shall prefer Mr. Ray to the soldier. I'm afraid of firearms."

"I don't fear them anything like sermons, myself. I'd rather face a whole battery than a sermon privately delivered. But it has been my experience of this soldier, that he preaches more sermons than the minister — that is, private and confidential ones. Mr. Ray has never yet addressed me any little private homilies. Isabel has a close monopoly of them, I think. It's probably a 'trust,' whatever that may be, that the newspapers talk about. A spiritual trust! Down with trusts! Girls, don't let's stand it—give us liberty or give us death!"

"He'll preach to you as soon as he really finds you out," said Isabel. "He don't know you yet for what you are. But you'll probably enlighten him by the close of the evening."

"Yes; I mean to flirt with him desperately in the eyes of the

whole audience. He'll like it; but, oh, the deacons!"

She now turned her attention to Elinor, who had sat quiet, amused but silent, through all this nonsense, and exclaimed: "If I were not so mortally afraid of Dante Gabriel Leonardo da Vinci Raphael Alphonso Byron de la Hardige, I'd go for him instead. I don't really like ministers, if truth must be told, but the professor paralyzes me. Such sublimity is not for every day. I would soar up to his point occasionally, speak Browningesque, and look the ineffable; but I couldn't hold out, and when I sank back into commonplace, and asked him to go to market, I fear he would—assassinate me!" and she gave the last word in a stage whisper, with the expression of Lady Macbeth. Elinor laughed with the rest, but changed the subject by proposing to go down to the parlor, as it was about time for the gentlemen to arrive. Lucile met them as demurely as though she had not been taking their names in vain, and rallied one and all in her light way, until perfect ease was attained, for both Isabel and Elinor felt somewhat embarrassed in greeting the gentlemen, after Lucile's pointed raillery. That young person's audacity did not desert her even in the face of the professor, of whom she inquired "How many hours of Wagner an ordinary mortal not watched over by the gods could possibly survive?"

"Oh, several," he replied, "if there are alleviating conditions."

"What might alleviating conditions be?"

"Very agreeable company, handsome dresses, and, perhaps, bon-bons."

"You do know the feminine heart, Herr Hardige, but how could one indulge in bon-bons in the eyes of the audience?"

"Surreptitiously, of course, which would be half the charm."

"You haven't brought any?"

"Not a one. I think it would be sacrilege."

"Then I shall have to depend upon the other consolations. I'll look at Elinor; her dress is a poem, and I'll monopolize the best company."

But Lucile, no more than the rest, visited the opera to talk or to look at fine dresses, and once the curtain rose, and the music began, she threw off her lighter mood, and was soon absorbed. Indeed, her gaiety had been more than half assumed, and she was serious-minded to-night, though happy in her congenial surroundings. Of course there was much animated talk between scenes, and considerable excitement throughout the evening upon the part of Herr Hardige, but, on the whole, the party was intent upon the music, though vividly conscious of each other's presence in the box. Long as the opera was, no one was tired, Lucile as little as any, for she had a musical as well as a poetical gift, and felt the new, strange, wonderful music to the center of her being. Poetry blended with it in her mind, and snatches of everything she had ever read floated about in memory to the tune of these weird, new measures. Sometimes it was Maud in the meadow under the Hall, singing

> "A passionate ballad, gallant and gay,
> A martial song like a trumpet's call!
> Singing alone in the morning of life,
> In the happy morning of life and of May—
> Singing of men that in battle array,
> Ready in heart and ready in hand,
> March with banner, and bugle, and fife,
> To the death for their native land."

Sometimes Ulysses "far on the ringing plains of windy Troy;" sometimes Guinevere, who

"Looked so lovely as she swayed
The rein with dainty finger-tips;
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

Sometimes it was the "Blessed Damozel who leaned from the gold bars of heaven;" and, again, Helen of old, and Margaret with Mephistopheles at her side. All poetry seemed blended in this music in Lucile's mind; in that of Herr Hardige all life, which, of course, included all poety—but much more. In it he lived all the varying lives of men, but with the deepest intensity in all. He felt in it all passions, all desires, whatever moves the hearts of men, and felt them with a vividness almost exceeding the reality of life. His eyes blazed with the excitement of it, his breath came quickly, his face was pale; he was living ages in these hours.

To Elinor it was a revelation. She had never before known how intense her nature was, of what rapture or what power she was capable, of how it was possible that she could be stirred. She felt a sense of alarm at the possibilities of her nature. The others were moved simply as ordinary people are moved by good music for which they have a taste. They were not bored like the majority of the large audience, which yawned behind its fan, ached with the long sitting in confined positions; they discriminated, enjoyed portions intensely, and were rather indifferent to others; they heard critically, and compared the different singers, and knew all about the setting of the play, as well as about the music. They would talk about it all coolly when they reached home.

But all would remember this evening for many years. The scent of the roses which Lucile held would hardly fade from

the mind of Frank Dana with the passing months. Isabel would feel Mr. Ray at her side whenever music stirred again, and neither Elinor nor Herr Hardige would ever be able to forget this night, the wailing of the instruments, the passion of the voices, the rolling of the chorus like the rolling of the sea, the odors and the lights, and the electrical consciousness of each other's presence—no, it would never pass away; for good or for ill it had come, and it would remain. They were in the grasp of Destiny.

CHAPTER XII.

"Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,
It turns in less than two nights?"

—*Timon of Athens.*

THESE lines of Shakespeare were running through the mind of Isabel Logan the entire day with that "damnable iteration" whereof Hamlet speaks. They had flashed there suddenly, as such pat sayings do, after the sociable which the church held in its parlors the previous evening. Mr. Ray had sought Isabel when she first entered, for he had always to seek her if he wished to speak with her, and they had chatted a few moments, when he had been called away. After that she saw him no more, except at a distance. During almost the whole evening he was at Imogene Willis' side or in her neighborhood. "Just like all the men," Isabel overheard one lady saying to another, "caught by a pretty face; but if he doesn't tire of that little idiot soon, he has a greater taste for idiocy than I give him credit for."

"Oh, Imogene is really charming," was the reply, "and you are greatly mistaken if you count her an idiot. She is one of the shrewdest girls I know. If she fancies marrying this young minister, she'll marry him, you mark my words."

"I don't doubt that, in the least. I've seen such men married out of hand by that sort of girls before. But it's an everlasting

pity. He will despise her in a month, and endure her ever after. I should like to warn him."

"You had better not. It would only hasten the consummation. If a man wishes to make a fool of himself he has the inalienable right, and would consider himself deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, if thwarted. Marriage is a failure, anyway; the institution played out, and he might as well make this mistake as another."

"Well, I shall pray that he may have grace to resist the wiles of this particular tempter, anyway. She is too arrant a flirt to inveigle such a man as Mr. Ray."

"Perhaps she is only flirting with him, after all."

"It looks like a genuine infatuation on her part. Have you noticed how he can't get away from her this evening? He has tried two or three times, and she recalls him on some pretext."

"Yes; he probably don't like to do the devoted quite so publicly, but can't help it without being really rude. Ministers learn to parry these assaults by long practice, but, at first, they are helpless in the hands of an experienced angler."

"He doesn't appear to be unhappy."

"No; I fancy he likes it well enough."

Isabel had left the church early and gone home. She had angrily put the whole thing out of her mind, and determined not to trouble herself further about Mr. Ray or his affairs; but this morning it was back again, and kept thrusting itself before her whatever she tried to do. She was disgusted with herself, and determined to put in a hard day's work visiting her class of boys at their homes, and taking to them certain books and papers which she had selected for their use. It was a long and tiresome round, but she was much cheered by her reception everywhere. The boys were getting really fond of her, and

confidential with her in a way she had much desired, but feared she might not be able to achieve. She had learned what their individual tastes were, what their personal ambitions, and what their prominent mental and moral characteristics. This, she felt, was a great deal, and she now felt somewhat prepared to deal with them. Some were bright, intelligent lads, in whom she hoped to awaken an ambition for study; more of them were of merely ordinary capacity, and with certain low tastes which they had inherited, and which had been strengthened by their environment. Two or three were really vicious, and with a constitutional taint which made dealing with them rather a hopeless task. But in all she hoped to awaken some higher ambition than they had yet felt, and had partially succeeded, she thought. All were certainly improving in manners and appearance, and learning to value her approval or the reverse. She was often led to praise them heartily for their efforts, but sometimes obliged to chide for indifference or neglect. She had kept steadily in mind the raising of their ideals, but she had much to contend with in the surroundings of their lives.

The few who were fond of books were reached with comparative ease. Good models were easily placed before them, and genuine emulation inspired; but with those who could not be thus interested it was a hard task. Telling them the stories of noble lives was almost the only resource. This Isabel did with great skill, and the boys were all exceedingly fond of her talk, but it was hard and wearing work, and she sometimes became discouraged. To-day she was inviting them for another evening of stories and games at her own home. Sometimes she met them at the church, where other teachers helped to amuse and instruct them. In all, this work was taking so much of her time that she never felt now that she had no proper work in the

world. She even felt driven with her labors, and looked upon an occasional idle day as a luxury.

As she was returning home toward evening, Herr Hardige overtook her on the street, and walked with her awhile. She told him where she had been, and something about her boys. "I have one boy who is music mad," she said, "and I would like to get your opinion of his abilities sometime. If he has any real talent, I would like to help him to cultivate it."

"And I. I would work at night to help him if he has the real taste, but mostly it is a mere liking. Many have that."

"Will you see him some time at my house?"

"Most willingly; but I shall likely frighten him to death. Boys are afraid of me. They run when I come near. They think I am the devil, from my cloven foot." He spoke bitterly, more so than Isabel had ever heard him, and she said:

"Boys are mostly mere little animals, and we mustn't expect much of them."

"Must we expect much of their elders, Miss Logan?"

"Well, not too much. I confess I am greatly disappointed in most people." She, too, spoke rather bitterly this time, and he observed it.

"I am sorry you are beginning to feel that. We all come to it, but you are too young. Discourage the feeling. Think well of everybody — even of me, Miss Logan. I am not half so bad as I seem — only disagreeable. I hope I have not disappointed you?"

"Far from it," said Isabel heartily. "I think you and I will be great friends."

"And surely you are not disappointed in any of our mutual friends? They are all delightful, I think; and I thank you for their acquaintance, Miss Logan. I prize Mr. Ray above every-

body. He has enriched my life. I can never give him up. I think he may reconcile me to living, yet."

"Did you need that—have you been so unhappy?"

"I have been of men the most miserable. I have hated the world, and felt like Byron:

> 'Count o'er the joys thy life has known,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be.'"

"That must be terrible. I cannot imagine any feeling of that kind."

"You have had too happy a life to understand. Some time you may learn, but I hope not, Miss Logan—ah, I hope not. Despair is a terrible thing. I think I have thrown it off—I think I have some hope again."

"Oh, I am so glad. I hope you may grow happier every day."

"You may help me if you will, I think, Miss Logan."

"Pray tell me how. I would do anything to help you to the happiness I know you must deserve."

"Help me with your friends. They value your opinion, and will think better of me if you approve so poor a fellow. I like your friends, Miss Logan, and it will make me very happy if they accept me as their equals. I cannot bear their scorn. I cannot live if they merely condescend to me."

He spoke passionately—excitedly, and Isabel was much moved. She scarcely knew what to say. She knew that he meant Elinor, and she did not feel that she could answer for her. She knew that pride was one of the strong elements in her friend's character—pride and a sort of cool judgment, which would be little likely to approve this fiery young enthusiast, she

feared. She did not like to give him a word of false encouragement — she felt more like giving him a word of warning — but she could not bring herself to do that. She took refuge in generalities.

"I can not think of anyone who would need to condescend to you, Herr Hardige. I certainly am very glad and proud to know you. I hope we shall be very good friends."

"No, I do not fear that you will scorn me. You are of generous heart, like Mr Ray. We three can understand each other without trying. You would never misunderstand Mr. Ray; you are akin to him in nature; you are counterparts. Knowing you, he can not help but value you—it is in the nature of things. There is a spiritual affinity, as certain in its workings as the chemical affinity we all know. And, while you two are so utterly unlike me, yet you both understand me. You make no mistake from the first. But I do not so much trust the others."

He said this last to himself, apparently, and in a low tone, and Isabel made no reply. She was embarrassed that he should talk to her in this way, but comforted herself with the feeling that he was only thinking aloud, and scarcely conscious of her presence; that his whole mind was on the problem he was so anxiously studying—the problem of her friend's attitude toward him. She felt that it was going to be a difficult thing to deal with, and she was very sorry he had conceived the idea of bringing her into it in any manner. She half dreaded him, too, as a possible friend of her own—with this terrible directness of speech, and this searching vision. But she liked him sincerely, sympathized with him deeply, and felt she would honestly aid him if she could. He walked on by her side in silence for some

time, evidently deep in thought; then he half paused, looked her fully in the face, and said:

"You will help me, Miss Logan; you will not hurt me; you will not belittle me? I know you will not. Why do I ask? I beg your pardon, my friend. There is such bitterness in my heart at times that I am suspicious of the best."

"You can trust me, Herr Hardige; I will in no way prejudice your case. I will even help you if I can, although I may be wrong in that. But I promise to be your friend, and I hope you will be very successful."

She smiled as she said this, for he had turned eagerly in the street and was almost facing her as she spoke, with a face which seemed illuminated—it was so bright, so expressive, so exalted. He grasped her hand eagerly, cried "God bless you," and walked rapidly away.

When Herr Hardige reached his own room he found it occupied by a boy who was one of his most promising pupils, and in whom he took a strong interest. The lad was about eighteen years old, and, from some outward indications, Herr Hardige had begun to fear he was entering, or being strongly tempted to enter, upon that sort of a fast life to which so very many young men dedicate the bloom of their youth. He left the piano as the professor entered and sat down by the fire. "I took possession of your den rather unceremoniously, and have been loafing here an hour or two for want of something better to do. But I won't stay to bore you, for you are always busy."

"But not too busy to see my friends. Are you not fully employed, too? At your age one should not lose time. If I were but eighteen now I should attempt so much that I should never have an idle hour, I think. Youth ought to plan large."

"But I have no ambition. If I had, time would not drag so.

I am bored to death with mine. I envy you your enthusiasms."

"Well you may. Without enthusiasms, how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable would life become. One who tries to live only in the world of matter has a wearisome time here below. It is only in the realm of ideas that one really lives. Get an enthusiasm, boy, and get it quickly, or you perish."

"I wish I could, but nothing stirs me. Nothing seems worth while any more."

"Not even high living and noble thinking?"

"Well, I'm afraid not. I think my tastes are getting rather low. I begin to go with the crowd."

"Oh; but, my dear boy, you must beware of going with the crowd. That is the swift way to destruction. The crowd go to do evil, and surely you are not following them there?"

"Yes, I am even following them there. I am no hypocrite, and won't pretend to be better than I am."

"And have you thought where that road leads? Have you considered the end from the beginning? I am older than you, and I have watched young men for many years. I know but too well where they drift as soon as they take in the anchor. Once started they go swiftly, too. There is only rottenness and corruption in sin. Such as you ought to scorn it, to loathe it, to put it beneath your feet."

"That is easy to say."

"And easy to do, too, if you only keep a high ideal. When I was a mere boy I set up one ideal. I meant to be clean; I determined not to be defiled before God. I have always had that ideal before me, and I have not found it hard to live up to it."

"It is easy, perhaps, if you never start in the other way, but it's not very easy to turn back."

"You are right there. A man who determines to be a pure man, a clean man, a man fit to live with the best, never places himself in temptation to live otherwise. He avoids all the temptations which beset men who live loosely. He looks upon them with a fine scorn; he disdains them. He says to any suggestion of evil, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' He tramples upon the first faint suggestion of wrong. He lives above these things. It is not hard, but it would be hard if he went the way of the world, and saw all sin and vileness. He would become contaminated by the very atmosphere, and so lose his powers of resistance. You, my dear boy, want to live with decent people; you want to get into a respectable atmosphere. Don't take offense, but the people you mingle with now—I don't care if they are in the so-called first circles—are not respectable; they are tainted; they go with the multitude to do evil; they would corrupt any youth. I know them. Their conversation is impure—that is the first symptom of moral decay. Their ideals are low; they jest about sacred things; they excite themselves with strong drink, which is vile, and they fall through their senses, which are weak. A man should be strong. I despise a man who can not rule himself. You ought to despise them, also."

"Oh, I despise myself enough."

"How can you bear to live with a man whom you despise? You can't run away from yourself. It would be easier, I should think, to oblige yourself to respect yourself."

"I can hardly do that now."

"You are young, and can do anything. To have lost the purity of youth is certainly irreparable. I will not pretend to comfort you for such infinite loss as that. You must mourn that forever, I fear. You will never be quite the same; but you

have to choose now between ever deeper and deeper degradation, until self-respect, manhood, the world's respect, everything, are gone; and, on the other hand, re-possession of yourself, rehabilitation, a growing in manhood and honor, a useful and happy life, and the end of a man and not a beast. You have no time to lose. Choose you this day. Oh, my dear boy, if you could only know as I know the awful downward tending of an impure life—the inevitable wreck, the dismal end—you would not hesitate. I have watched many youths who have run that mad career. Their lives have been the most joyless, most bitterly despairing, most gloomy, of all the lives I have known. There is no pleasure in sin; nothing but feverish unrest, remorse, retribution."

"Oh, I know that well enough. I am more miserable than you can imagine. I wish I were dead."

"Being dead would not suffice; you will take yourself with you wherever you go. Death won't change your character. Every mark you make upon it here will remain. You can't blot out the scars of sin upon a man's soul. Don't dare to die till you've improved the quality of your life. Don't make any more ineffaceable marks upon your inner being. Arouse your manhood, and make your life worth living."

"If I only knew how to begin?"

"Begin by leaving all your old companions; they are bad; desert them; enlist in a new company."

"That is pretty hard to do."

"No doubt; but it is essential, unless you feel yourself stronger than they, and can declare your independence and maintain it."

"I'm afraid I couldn't do that."

"Then run away. Resolve fully to lead a new life, and, if necessary, flee to the wilderness to do it. Read Tennyson's

"BEGIN BY LEAVING ALL YOUR OLD COMPANIONS—THEY ARE BAD."

Holy Grail, and resolve, like Galahad and Percivale, to see it. Pursue it through such dangers and darkness as they did, holding on to your new resolve, and you'll see it, too, in the end."

"If you will help me, I think I may succeed. It is hard to keep up to the mark alone."

"Indeed it is; and you must put yourself in the way of all the helps you can get. Come with me to Mr. Ray's school, get acquainted with such clean men as Frank Dana, and such young ladies as you will meet there. They will be an inspiration to you. In six months you will not know yourself, if you'll keep in that atmosphere."

"Oh, I should be glad to lose myself, if I might find a better man."

"You will—have no fears. Get a new ambition. Raise your standard — not only of action, but of thought — and you'll be a man I shall be proud of yet."

"If I am, I shall owe it all to you. The men I know are not like you."

"'Seek, and ye shall find.' There are multitudes of men of pure life and high ideals. They are the men to live among; they are nature's aristocracy. It is a fine thing to belong to such a privileged class as that. You can do it if you like."

He stopped talking, and seated himself at the piano. The boy had a fine nature, and could appreciate the music, so he preached him another sermon on the keys — one which took hold with even greater force than the first, for it allayed all the jarring dissonances of his nature, and put him in tune for the new music to which he would henceforth step — a music which led away from the low plane of the senses, and drew him on, with ever sweeter allurement, up to new heights. He began henceforth to keep step with the universe.

Every evening, for a long time, found him for a few minutes, at least, in the professor's room. He put his whole soul into his music--made that the excuse for deserting his companions, which he did at once and almost entirely, and began gradually to make new friends of another sort. Mr. Ray fascinated him from the first, and soon had a marked influence over him. He interested him in books, and put him to work in the literary clubs. Frank Dana enrolled him in the White Cross Society, and watched over him carefully. Isabel became his one friend among women. It was not long before she became his high ideal of perfect womanhood, and all others were tried by her standard. She made him acquainted with the boys, and enlisted him as an aid in all her undertakings. He began to teach the musical lad; to take them all off on country excursions, and introduce them to the pure pleasures of the field and the stream; to teach some to draw, and some to sing; in short, to forget himself in others; and henceforth his way was easy. All things helped him now, as all things had dragged him down before. He was swimming with the tide.

CHAPTER XIII.

"To business that we love we rise betime,
And go t' it with delight."

—*Antony and Cleopatra.*

IN the large basement of the church over which Mr. Ray presided were rooms where he soon began to collect the boys of the streets in the evening, and to devise various means for their improvement. Here, where the warmth and light alone were very attractive, he formed several large classes, who received instruction for an hour each evening, and then were allowed to amuse themselves as they chose. There were books, illustrated papers, and games—always music of some simple kind, and frequently recitations and readings. Great numbers came, and the labor of caring for them began to be great. But like King Arthur, Mr. Ray had heard the people crying:

"Arise and help us, thou,
For here between the man and beast we die."

And he could never banish that cry again into the silence. What he could, would he do single handed, to redeem the youth, but, like Arthur, he felt the need of knights who should be helpers; and, after a time, he had his own order of the Table Round—young men like the ideal knight,

"Who reverenced his conscience as his king,
Whose glory was redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander—no, nor listened to it;
Who loved one only, and who clave to her."

And upon each one of these there fell, from some high source, something more than "a momentary likeness of the king"—a likeness in thought, in aim, in purpose—until, in whatever work he undertook, he had his trained helpers, whose calling was as truly sacred as his own. It was to these that he entrusted his evening school of street boys, and to these that he owed its great success. They did much more than to teach—they unconsciously became ideals for the ragged little army, and builded better than they knew, in this respect, many a time.

The ideal of the street-boy is too often the ruffian who swears at him in the street, or loafs and smokes about some bar-room door. Toward that ideal he tends as he grows older, and never rises above it. What a vast gain to give him a different model, to place him in some sort of relation to a gentleman, to let him see how the highest can serve.

Here, before long, was found Herr Hardige's protege, James Bryant, one of the most useful of the younger aids, for he was a boy himself and knew how to reach boys' hearts. The singing class, the writing class, and the class in wood-carving, by turns occupied his mind, and he proved useful to all, and in the reading-room he often gave the boys helps and hints which strengthened their taste for good reading, and gave them a scorn for the vile products which had heretofore been their only idea of what books were. Over all this work of his aids Mr. Ray kept zealous watch and ward, sparing no labor, no thought, no time, when either was demanded, yet leaving all the routine work to others. For the first time this large, rich and intelligent congregation learned what it was capable of doing, and appreciated its own strength.

Its power began to be felt in the city and its example followed. Practical work suddenly became the order of the day, and some

heretofore dead people its prophets. Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm, and of enthusiasm Mr. Ray and his people had full store.

But he did not escape outside criticism, and even unjust detraction. He was called a sensationalist, a bidder for notoriety, a new-fangled Christian, and a sky-rocket which would blaze its little moment, with its trail of glory, and be gone. To all this he gave no heed. Unresting, but unhasting, he pursued his way. He had his hours of questioning and of gloom, his full share of the disappointments which men of his ardent temperament encounter in a lethargic society. He sometimes felt that all words, even the strongest, had lost their power, and that a man in these days has no lever with which to work. He was often chilled to the heart by the irresponsiveness of the people to his most moving appeals, and felt that the awakening to a spiritual life of this generation was a hopeless task. The old words had lost their grip; there was no name by which to conjure now. But these were passing moods. His permanent feeling was one of strong faith in the people, of great hope of good to come, of new methods of work, laid on the old enduring foundations of faith in God, and hope for humanity.

In a great city the work for such a man is, practically, endless. Much that he saw to do he was, of course, forced to leave undone, but he attacked many wrongs in high places, and succeeded in redressing some. He succeeded in rousing public sentiment to the point of action against some of these great sins which are commonly looked upon as inevitable attachments to the life of large cities, and hence are allowed to go unrebuked, until the public conscience is hardened to their enormity, and no man raises hand or voice against them. The wrongs of the poor, the extortions of money sharks, the sufferings of underpaid

labor, the deep damnation of licentiousness, the horrible crimes against women and children wrought by drunkenness and debauchery, the need of constant oversight over penal and reformatory institutions—these were themes which roused an interest unfelt before in many attendants upon this church, and which drew to it large numbers of those who believed in practical Christian work, but who cared nothing for the speculations of theology. The Church of the Holy Hair-Splitting sent him some good workers as he became known, and the Church of the Holy Spectacles a few; and even the congregation which only knew that it knew nothing, furnished some who thought they might do something, even if they could know nothing.

This all caused some of those who considered themselves "the judicious," to grieve, and to fear that the church was to be overrun with outsiders. Especially was this so when one or two gamblers (with cards, not stocks) were seen occasionally in the congregation; but when some dreadful hints of evil to come from this source were carried to Mr. Ray, he laughingly replied that he did not see what harm they could do there, as they could hardly ply their vocation during divine service, and that it was just possible that they, too, had souls, and that the grace of God might find them. So the representatives of Poker Flat were left undisturbed, and it came to be whispered about mysteriously, after a while, that some women who had sinned had been seen in the back seats--had even shed tears sitting there. This might have done great harm, but it was considerately hushed up among the few who knew it, and all went well.

During all this first winter of his labors, Mr. Ray was engaged in investigating the condition of the large hospital for the insane, which had for years been a scandal in the community. He made himself fully acquainted with its condition and resolved to

right some of the most flagrant of the wrongs there committed. This would, he knew, involve him in a terrible contest with those in charge, and rouse the most violent antagonism among the supporters in the community. He dreaded the ordeal unspeakably. He had never yet been engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with politicians and office-holders, but he knew something of the bitterness of these contests, of the unscrupulousness of those he would have to deal with, of the utter exasperation of those who were attacked, and of what vile tools they could always call to their defense.

He had seen these battles fought, and knew in what he was about to engage; and, had he thought it possible that the wrongs could be exposed and righted without his interference, he would never have gone into the contest. But the community was indifferent, the officials entrenched, and everybody dreaded to strike the blow and to bear the storm of calumny and abuse which would surely follow.

It took nerve, and that of the strongest, to open the battle. Mr. Ray was very pale when he arose in the pulpit upon the morning when he made the first expose of the condition of this institution; but he was cool and made no unconsidered charges. But the charges he did make, and which he stated he was prepared to prove, were serious enough and shocking enough to rouse the congregation by their mere statement. It needed neither denunciation nor eloquence to do this. In a calm, straightforward, business-like manner this story was told, the personal experiences related, the question put: "Is this thing to be allowed longer?" All could see the repressed excitement of the speaker; the hot indignation which he held in leash, the difficulty of mastering his feelings and restraining his speech; but none could know the internal tumult, the contending feelings,

the awful strain under which he labored. Quietly he sat down when he had done, simply requesting the congregation to join in the singing of Luther's hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." As the great volume of sound rose up, every heart was stirred, and the meeting closed amid a strong but repressed excitement. The sermon was given to the papers, and next day the storm burst upon the head of the speaker. It was even fiercer than he had dreamed. The resources of the language were exhausted by the friends of the officials in denial, in denunciation of the aggressive minister, in personal abuse. Personal violence even was feared by some of his friends, who quietly watched over him. But he stood manfully to his guns. He called loudly for the investigation, which would uncover the wrongs he had pointed out, and he reiterated what he knew, in season and out of season, until no man in that great city could claim to be ignorant of what was transpiring in their midst. Many people blamed him severely for uncovering this hideous sore — many thought he had better attend to his business of preaching the gospel, and let such matters as this alone. Some began to inquire what hidden motive he could have, and many agreed that nothing but a desire for notoriety could have inspired his action. There were not lacking those who thought he must have a personal spite against the superintendent, nor those who thought the whole story a tissue of manufactured lies. These classes of cavillers come to the front, inevitably, during every such controversy.

People do not like to be disturbed by these agitators — they like the complacency of ignorance—they do not desire to have ulcers thrust upon their attention. The reformer is never a favorite in the drawing-room, in the office, or the mart of trade. The people who never do anything to better the world them-

selves, take serious exceptions always to the conduct of those who do. Especially is this true of the methods employed by the workers. Criticism upon this point is always stern and strong. The particular way in which the attack is made is sure to be the worst conceivable, in the eye of the critic. Mr. Ray did not escape all this, nor had he expected to do so; but he allowed the personal part of the attack to remain entirely unanswered, while he stood by his first statements, and fortified them with all necessary proof. He knew that "violent fires soon burn out themselves," and that "He tires betimes, that spurs too fast betimes," as much now as in Shakespeare's day; and, when the storm lulled, he asked his question anew—"What are you going to do about it?"

The proper authorities, in time, after a searching investigation, in which a worse state of affairs was proven than had been asserted to exist, removed the superintendent and other officials, and undertook to institute a new order of affairs. Among the subjects which had come in for investigation was that of the abuse of the system of physical restraint, and the new superintendent was one opposed to the system itself, and who was to undertake to run the institution without it.

This was a great pleasure for Mr. Ray, for he had attacked that abuse with all the ardor of his nature, and thoroughly believed in the new departure. So when, later on, the new superintendent invited him to come to the hospital on a certain day and assist in an entertainment to celebrate the inauguration of this new era of reform, he felt that it would be a celebration worth attending, and invited some friends to accompany him.

Among these were Herr Hardige, Frank Dana and Isabel Logan, who had all stood by him stanchly in the fight. Gertrude and Lucile had begged to accompany Isabel, and were,

therefore, of the party. They went down on the cars, and when they reached the grounds a large number of the patients had assembled on the lawn. When Mr. Ray appeared he was invited to make a speech appropriate to the occasion, which he did, and was warmly applauded by the patients, particularly at the point where he dwelt upon the necessity of much additional inward restraint among them, now that all outward force was to be removed. They were evidently practicing it to-day, for they were mostly calm, and even sarcastic and facetious upon the subject of this new holiday.

When Mr. Ray and his friends had looked well through the renovated and purified institution and taken note of all the reforms, they made their way back to the city in a mood at once serious and triumphant.

"It is done; but it will not remain done," remarked Herr Hardige. "That is the sadness of specific reforms. Eternal vigilance is the only hope."

"That is true of everything. You can't do anything up for good and all in a world of change," said Frank Dana; "while the breath remains in us we must contend. You can't even retire on half pay in the battle of life."

"I don't want to," said Mr. Ray. "I'm a born fighter, I think, for as soon as one foe is down I'm looking about for another. I should be lost in a world where everything was finished, and you had only to enjoy the fruits of victory. The lotus-eaters must have been an unhappy lot. Think of how it would seem—

> "In the hollow lotus-land to live and die reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

"It wouldn't exactly suit you, would it?" answered Frank; "but most people would like it. I know a plenty of them who—

"Smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
Roaring deeps and fiery sands,"

and they are very angry if you try to rouse them to their selfishness."

"We have seen plenty of that during this contest," remarked Isabel.

"And always shall in every one," answered Mr. Ray. "The advance guard must not only lead the rest, but drag them by the hair of the head a good many times."

"That is the way I have felt like dragging some people in this fight," remarked the professor, savagely. "I should have enjoyed it more than anything I can think of."

"You are like Peter, who cut off the ear of the high-priest's servant," said Isabel.

"Yes, I always admired Peter for that. If I had been in the habit of carrying a sword I'm afraid there would have been some ears missing among the sleepy officials I've visited on this business."

"You look sanguinary, even now. I'm afraid of you," cried Lucile, cowering in her seat.

"Oh, I won't harm poets. They are always considered non-combatants."

"It would not be safe to rank Miss Layton thus, professor," put in Frank. "She is very fierce for a poet. You have to be careful in dealing with her. Her eyes show it, if you look close. They are dangerous—that is the reason she conceals them with spectacles."

"And Miss Logan, too?" queried the professor, peering over at Isabel.

"I can't answer for Isabel; but I think it probable. She has been blood-thirsty, I know, over this asylum business—wanted

the heads, if not the scalps, of all the officers down there."

"And got them, too," she replied, triumphantly. "I own to being a strong belligerent. I rejoice in the fray, too. I haven't enjoyed myself so much in a long time. It's very exciting to be in a fight."

"Indeed it is," said Mr. Ray. "I haven't been so stirred up since I was a boy."

"I don't think this an enlivening holiday," said Herr Hardige, "though I rejoice that their fiendish implements of torture are a thing of the past, and that those poor souls will be held in check by mind and not by matter."

"Have you no fears of the result, Mr. Ray?" asked Gertrude.

"None at all. The best institutions are now governed without the use of these things, and we have a man there who has done it before, and can do it now. Mr. Coremo could tame lions if it were necessary."

Mr. Ray was very weary when he reached his room after the day's exciting adventures, and threw himself on a couch with a sigh of relief. But he soon noticed a note which his landlady had left on his table, and arose to read it. It was from Imogene Willis, and asked if he could call upon her that evening, as she wished to consult him about some of the arrangements for a bazaar she was planning. Mr. Ray felt annoyed. He wished to remain in quiet; and his thoughts when he lay there resting had been not of Imogene Willis, but of another — one who seemed always to understand him, never to intrude upon him; one whose gentle dignity and womanly charm had been growing upon him of late. But he did not think that he could send an excuse to a lady, so he began, rather wearily, to prepare himself to go out, and went with anything but alacrity. But the wel-

come he received was so warm, the pleasure his coming gave so undisguised, the care for his comfort so effusive, and the soft prattle so restful after a day of strain, that he was in no hurry to come away; and the winsomeness of the eyes which looked into his when he did come was so enticing that he was fain to go back another day.

CHAPTER XIV.

"My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd;
And I myself see not the bottom of it."
—*Troilus and Cressida.*

"I HAVE not forgotten that pleasant evening we all had at your house, Miss Isabel," said Mr. Ray, not long after. "When are you going to ask us again, or are you afraid to repeat a success?"

"Not at all. I have no doubt it would succeed a second time. Would the professor be ready?"

"Yes indeed—I was speaking two words for him and one for myself—he has spoken of it so often. I think he yearns to get nearer to Miss Lewis—socially I mean," smiling.

"But there is the difficulty. I don't know whether Elinor would come; or if it would be best for him, even if she would."

"Then you think she is quite indifferent to him?"

"I would not say that. I do not know what to think. She does not wear her heart upon her sleeve."

"She is wise; but ask her, and let us see what will come of it. It will be no worse for Lord Byron, for he's as badly off as he can be, I'm sure."

"Well, I will try it as soon as I can secure the others. Can you come at any time?"

"Yes; I would forego the queen's drawing-room if necessary.

I have the keenest interest in a love affair—if it is a little romantic."

"Elinor," said Isabel to her friend, the next time they met, "Mr. Ray proposes a second Walpurgis night soon—will you come?"

"With the same company?"

"Yes; no other people would do. It was the company that made that evening unique. I enjoyed it more than any party I ever gave."

"Oh, it was very charming, of course, and to be remembered; but I'm afraid I can't come again."

"May I know why?"

"Certainly. My father is very good to me, you know, and seldom interferes with my choosing my own company; but I know he does not approve of my meeting Herr Hardige—except professionally—and I don't think it right to do so."

"That is certainly a good reason; but would he object if he himself would get a little acquainted with the professor, and see what a gentleman he is, as well as what a genius?"

"He will never do that. He knows nothing of genius, and especially looks down upon that of a musical nature; and he would never meet him socially as an equal, consequently will never see his best side."

"I am very sorry, for I have learned to value him very highly, and to enjoy his society."

"I am glad he has so good a friend, and he is making a great success professionally, I hear. That ought to make him a happier man. I have been very sorry for him."

"He has been much more cheerful of late; but a little thing will plunge him into the depths again. I hate to think of it."

"He need not know I decline to meet him, surely."

"I am afraid he will suspect, for he and Mr. Ray have planned the party together, I think, and only informed me when it was all settled."

"Presumptuous, to say the least, and hazardous."

"So it seems. And you really will not come?"

"I think that will be best."

Isabel kissed her as she answered: "I must not tempt you, I suppose, if it is a matter of duty."

"Perhaps it is one of inclination as well, my dear."

"Perhaps; but, Elinor, you do not really look like it."

"Looks are not to be trusted, especially in blondes. Tell me, how is the young Savonarola?"

"If you mean Mr. Ray, he is winning golden opinions from all sorts of people; even more than at first," replied Isabel coolly, but with a somewhat heightened color. "You will have your party, just the same. Gertrude will more than fill my place. I am sure the professor will admire her. He is a judge of beauty, I assure you."

"That goes without saying. But he only admires you, and a party for him without your presence would be Hamlet with the melancholy Dane left out."

"You take too much for granted. I, at least, have no reason for thinking so. Of course, I should feel complimented, for he is, undoubtedly, the finest gentleman I know."

When Mr. Ray was told of the outcome of the invitation he was much chagrined, for he had been so injudicious as to mention the proposed evening to Herr Hardige, who had looked forward to it with much eagerness. What to do neither he nor Isabel could tell. They were painfully anxious to spare the professor the mortification, but did not know how to achieve this object. They concluded to say nothing whatever about it unless

he made some inquiries. He said nothing for some time, and they began to hope he would not refer to it, when, unable to conceal his impatience any longer, he suddenly asked Mr. Ray one day when the little visit would take place. That gentleman replied that he believed Miss Logan found some difficulty in getting her company together.

"Miss Lewis, of course, refuses to come. I knew it would be so. She has condescended as far as she can to the foreign gentleman. All right; he will trouble her no further."

Mr. Ray endeavored to explain, to soften, to lay blame upon the father, but all to no purpose. There was nothing which could appease the musician's wrath and mortification. When it had cooled somewhat he rang the bell at Mr. Lewis' door on the day for the usual lesson, and was shown to Elinor in the library. She received him in her usual cordial manner, but he would not lay off his cloak, would not sit down, but simply said: "I have come only to tell you that we will have no more lessons."

"Have no more lessons!" exclaimed Elinor, in unfeigned astonishment.

"I can come to you no more, as I have said."

"But have I not tried hard to improve under your instructions? Do I not learn as well as your other scholars?"

"Speak not of yourself with my other scholars—block-heads, idiots, harrowers of the soul—you can play the piano well, for a woman, and you know it. You can go to Petrowski."

"But I don't wish to go to Petrowski. I never wish anyone else for a teacher after you."

"You can have me no more for a teacher. It is too hard. I can not endure it longer. May I play for you once more, Miss Elinor?"

"Many times, I hope."

"No; but once. I shall tell you something in the music."

He sat down, preluding softly, while his face assumed the high, rapt look it always wore when he was absorbed in the music. Elinor looked at him with troubled eyes. How fine his face was, she thought, how refined, how sensitive, how eloquent! The eyes were beautiful, too; but her look fell upon his foot with almost a shudder. How he played! At first she had been so absorbed in her reflections that she scarcely heard him, but the music asserted itself at last. She listened in wonder, admiration, ecstacy.

It seemed like the story of a life of stormy passions, of repressed emotions, of unfathomable pain. The crashing tumult which depicted the storm-tossed soul in its battlings with the world was followed by a melody which fairly beat against the keys for expression, but gave no utterance. The repression was cruel, fiendish, deadly. It made her long to loose some imprisoned thing which was in the keys. Then followed the wailing as of a lost soul, such sadness was in the strain. It was almost more than she could bear. She covered her face with her hands and set her teeth hard together. Would he never stop? She was sure she could never forget even now what he had played, that the pain of the music would stay with her forever. But on and on it flowed—the irresistible tide of this weird, almost ghostly music—carrying her soul with it, until at last, when the musician was quite worn out with his own emotion, it floated away in a strain of silvery sweetness, as if the tired soul had given over all the tumult, all the struggle, had sung its swan song and passed out into dreamless annihilation. Then the player arose. Elinor did not move. Her hands still shaded her eyes as he glided like a phantom from the room.

"THEN THE PLAYER AROSE. ELINOR DID NOT MOVE."

And so the twilight deepened in the dim room as the last beams of the sunset fire faded from the gilded walls and high-arched windows, and the shadows gathered in the corners and gradually effaced the tapestries, the pictures on the walls, the statues in their niches, until all was gone but the glimmering of a dying fire upon the hearth. Still she sat in motionless silence with her hands shading her face. And still within her brain sounded the wailing of the keys, the deadly pain of those minor strains, the tragic intensity of the whole marvellous creation. She had no power to come back to real life. She was in the Inferno with Dante, and all the spirits of wildness and wrath were contending around her—within her, too, perhaps, for a something had risen up within her this day like an armed foe that must be met and fought and conquered. But let her linger this one hour with the dear pain of the music; let her revel in the sweetness of the confession which had been sounding there; let no one come to her rudely at this hour, to detach her from the unfathomable sweetness of the sorrow with which she had been baptized. She would think of nothing for the present but the story which had been told, of the heights upon which she had been placed, of the incense which had been burned before her shrine. No words could have made this clearer to her vision; no words accented the pain of the renunciation she had witnessed; no eloquence have added a note to the pleading cadence of the keys.

She could deceive herself no longer. She knew now how that passionate heart was struggling with its pain: how dark lay the highway of the future before that impassioned soul: how endless would be its longing and its rebellious grief. If he had not made it all so plain; if he had only left her to her carelessness and pride without this protest of his very soul; if he had but

spared her this! But now there was no escape. If she should take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth it would be there — this harrowing knowledge — if she should ascend up to heaven or make her bed in hell, it would still go with her. At last her emotion broke into tears, and, with long and passionate sobbing, spent itself for the time. During the first outflow of feeling her thought was all for him ; she was dwelling only on his disappointment, his humiliation, his lasting pain, for she was not of a shallow enough nature herself to take refuge in the thought that he would soon forget. But a little later on she began to have it forced upon her that it was not he alone who would suffer, would chafe, would rebel. She found that her own heart had to be taken into this account.

Why had she so madly thrown away what was so precious to her? Why had she brought useless suffering upon both? Why had she not held out a hand to save her own happiness when she saw it slipping away from her? She could content herself with her pride hereafter ; that alone remained. She felt that she would learn the truth full soon of Shakespeare's axiom—

"Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves."

If she could only have retained the lessons, the visits, the reading of the poets, the hours of soul-stirring music, when he threw his whole soul into his playing for her, oh, she could have been happy. She had been happy — too happy — merely to have these. But now, to see him no more, to hear no more music, to have him despise her, to wound him so deeply, to throw him back into the despair of the first days of their acquaintance, it was too much. She could not endure the thought. She would recall him, would write to him, would go to him.

All mad impulses rose within her, only to be beaten back by that cool reason which said: "Are you then prepared to yield all? He will brook no half revealments, no divided allegiance. Do you love him enough to yield all else for him, to renounce the world, and have but this alone?"

The struggle went on from day to day, but none knew of it, none suspected it, least of all he whom it concerned. He felt that she had scorned him, had cast him away as one inferior, had not even appreciated the gift he had laid at her feet. He was unutterably wretched. All former misery was light compared to this. His first youthful passion had been that of a boy, and only a boy's capacity for suffering had entered into his disappointment at that time. Now, with a man's whole soul, he felt the blow which had made his life a waste. This was, indeed, a measureless ill that had at last befallen him, the heir already of unnumbered ills. In music was his only refuge. To that he would flee when his pain became unbearable, and the stormy beating of the keys might have told to any sympathetic listener the whole tumultuous tale of passion and of wreck. But no friend was nigh to hear or to console, and alone he sorrowed and strove.

A month went by and they had not met, nor sent any word across the silence they had established.

Then one evening, when he was to play at a very select musical gathering, they both began to consider the possibility of their meeting there. He must go, of course; but with her it would be optional. "If she hates me and never wishes to see my face again," he said to himself, "she will not come. If, on the other hand, she has some pity, some little feeling, some real desire to know what I shall say in the music, she will come."

Elinor questioned in her own heart whether it would be best to go, but she knew all the time that she should go, that

there was scarcely anything but outward force which could prevent her going; and she was excited and unstrung during the entire day, remaining in the library and playing ever and anon the old lessons, and, when weary of that, turning over the Latin poets they had read together. She would see no one, and wished that she was not obliged to go out even to the family meals.

She went early and watched for his arrival at the drawing-room door, and wondered much how he would greet her and she him. She framed numberless kind speeches in her mind which she would be sure to make, to obliterate the unkind impression of her which she believed he had carried away. She scarcely knew who were about her or what they were saying. She had dressed herself in a soft, green tulle, with abundance of floating drapery, and she wore some creamy water lilies with their long, beautiful stems. She had donned it mechanically, not knowing or caring how she looked, for she was sure he would take no note of how she might be clothed; but the effect was good, and she had never looked more beautiful than to-night. She seemed to know when he entered the house, and the verse from Maud ran through her mind as she watched for his appearance at the door:

"She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat
Had I lain for a century dead—
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red."

And, somehow, the movement of this verse kept in her mind all the evening. Whatever she did was done to the rhythm of the lines; her thoughts kept time to this measure, and she could

not get away from it, do what she would. When his pale, sad face appeared at the door she felt herself suddenly grow red, and she knew that her eyes must betray her if anyone were observing; but, fortunately, no one was thinking of her, or took note of her excitement. As he came her way, and would have passed with a mere bow, she held out her hand, and he held it a moment, saying: "And you, too, are here?"

"You did not imagine I would miss it?"

"I thought, perhaps, you would never wish to hear any more music. Forgive me for the last; it was not music, but madness. I will play you something sweeter to-night. You will know it when I come to it, for it, too, was written for you. You inspire music, as Beatrice did poetry. Do you read any Dante now?"

"I can not read Dante, you know, without my teacher."

"And he has run away."

"Quite heartlessly," she answered, scarcely knowing what she said, and speaking lightly.

"It was very cowardly of him, but best."

He looked in her face, even took note of her dress, and said: "Venus rising from the sea," then passed on into the music-room, leaving her in a sort of dream.

She wished she could go away somewhere by herself; she longed for, yet dreaded, the music; she wanted to sit where she could see him as he played without his knowing it; she answered quite at random a number of greetings which were being made her. At last she found the seat she wished and took it at once, and waited. Only indifferent people and strangers were near her, who would not observe her, she thought.

When the music came it seemed to her to be the sweetest of earthly melodies—light, tender, elusive, of heavenly softness—but with one wailing chord through all. It seemed to her to

suggest that he had conquered resentment and rebellion at Fate, given up the unavailing fight with Destiny, and had now reached the altitude of serene but abiding sorrow. This was the message, as she read it, but it made her more unhappy than before. She could not bear that he should suffer so, and she asked herself more than once if she was prepared to end all this in the only way that was possible. Had he come to her as soon as the music was over, her mood of softness would, no doubt, have had its way; she would have yielded to her longing desire to have him near, to hear his voice, to look into his eloquent eyes, to see the glad light leap into them which she knew she could bring with a word; but he did not come, but left the house immediately after the music ceased, and she was saved from what she could but regard afterward as unworldly folly.

Mr. Ray stood at her side a moment after the music ended and while its rapture still lingered in her face.

"Was it not the most marvellous music you ever heard?" he asked.

"It was exceedingly wonderful."

"And our friend one of the most wonderful men I have ever known. Few, indeed, are so richly endowed as he, but so unhappy; it breaks my heart that I can not help him." He did not wait for a reply, but passed on into the crowd.

CHAPTER XV.

"Wisely and slow ; they stumble that run fast."
—*Romeo and Juliet.*

GERTRUDE DANA was leading a very quiet domestic life during all these months, devoting herself heart and soul to her mother, a gentle invalid whom she worshipped as a saint, and to the comfort of the father and brother she esteemed scarcely less. It was in her nature thus to devote herself to those she loved, and she found her own happiness in so doing. Beautiful as she was in form and face, she was still more beautiful in a perfectly even and symmetrical mental and moral nature. There were no jarring elements within her, but perfect counterpoise, and her unruffled serenity resulted from this inward harmony. Her deep, affectionate nature had, as yet, received no wounds, and she was, consequently, always happy, in a calm and even way, which made her one of the most desirable of companions for everyday life. That she was capable of the other extreme of a suffering deep and passionate you could not doubt if you looked but once into the depths of her liquid eyes; but, as yet, nothing had disturbed the calm of her girlish life.

She was as clear-headed as she was warm-hearted, too, and her good judgment was seldom at fault in any of the affairs of her small world, and was much depended upon by her friends. "Ask Gertrude" had been the cry of all her school friends when

anything of importance was to be decided, and they made no mistakes when they followed her advice.

Elinor remembered this in the mood of questioning and indecision which was upon her, and longed, unspeakably, to tell Gertrude everything, and let her decide her fate. But she had no opportunity, for Gertrude never showed by word or look that she guessed that aught was wrong with her friend. Isabel had given her a chance to speak more than once, for Isabel knew more of the matter than Gertrude, and was passionately interested—was, indeed, a strong partisan in the case; but, perhaps for this very reason, which Elinor divined, she did not wish to speak with her. She almost avoided Isabel, in these days, although she had never so much desired to see her as now—never found herself so fascinated by her friend. Because she felt that Isabel did know she felt thus, she could not bear that anyone should have this knowledge, and yet it was the most subtle of temptations to tell more to one who already had divined a part. But she was afraid to trust herself to Isabel's influence, for she was far from having decided to say: "All for love, and the world well lost." Her own pride, added to the dread of her father's displeasure, still held sway very strongly, and she was afraid of weakening the hold they had upon her. But to Gertrude she could confide, she believed, her innermost thought. Gertrude would not be biased ; Gertrude would see clearly; Gertrude, of all the people she knew, could be absolutely trusted to say what was right.

Still she hesitated. She could not make it all clear even to Gertrude, she felt. There was something in this fascination of her very nature by this stranger which she could not account for to herself. How, then, could she make another understand, especially Gertrude, who had never had her own nature awak-

ened by such experience? No; it could not be that Gertrude would understand. She herself could not have helped another in such a matter a few short months ago—could not possibly have comprehended the situation at all. So she kept her own counsel, as wise women always do in such things, and many times save themselves much after-regret and humiliation.

How much we sometimes dislike our friends, even dread and fear them at times, because they know too much. How angry we are at ourselves for some momentary weakness which leads us to betray what we would fain keep sacred from the world. How thankful we are, sometimes with a lifelong thankfulness, when we have conquered such weakness, have restrained our impulsive longing for revelation and kept to cold commonplace, even with our dearest friends. Elinor's instinct told her this, but she was so sorely beset within by warring passions that she did yearn unutterably for some outward help. Once she went to spend the day with Gertrude, with all these struggles hidden in her heart, but giving no outward sign upon her face. She was as cool and unruffled, as proud and stately, to all appearance, as ever in her life, and Gertrude suspected nothing of the fires within.

Fortunately, perhaps, for Elinor's secret, Lucile came too, that day, by accident, and precluded all possibility of confidence.

"You look well, little one," said Elinor, as she held Lucile a moment in her arms upon her arrival.

"Then looks are a deception and a snare. I feel in a diabolical mood. Everything goes wrong at home and I have stood it just as long as I could, and finally run away. My discretion will prolong my life, and I shall live to fight another day. But I don't much care if I don't. I'm getting desperate; the daily grind is a little too much. I'm tired."

"Poor dear," cried Gertrude; "no wonder you're tired. I wish I could take half your burdens. Pack as many as you can on to me to-day. I don't have enough trials to keep me human. Things are very unevenly distributed, I think. Where is the law of compensation we used to read about? You must have some good things we don't know about?"

"Oh, I have plenty of good things. I'm even absurdly happy when I have even half a chance, and even my trials don't weigh on me as they ought."

"As they ought, indeed!"

"Yes, they ought to hold me down to mundane things in a sensible manner and make me do something practical to overcome them; but my nature is so light that I can realize things only for a little while at a time. The first breath of good that comes along takes me off my feet, and I forget how seriously miserable I ought to be, and so do nothing to mend my fate."

"For instance?"

"Oh, you know as well as I do that I ought to go seriously to work and provide for myself and help my mother. I mean to all the time, and make a spasmodic effort occasionally, but you know how I hate it, and so when one little plan fails I lie still a long time, and enjoy my idleness, too. It's shameful; you ought to labor with me for my own good."

"Well, we will. We'll devote the day to it. But first come and see mamma; she'll be impatient to see you both. Poor little mother isn't very well this week."

When the girls were alone together again after their call upon Mrs. Dana, Lucile suddenly exclaimed: "Isn't it a shame about Mr. Ray?"

"What's a shame—what has Mr. Ray done?" exclaimed both of the girls in a breath, hardly used as yet to Lucile's impulsive way.

"Going to marry that Imogene Willis, and she so perfectly horrid, while he is simply angelic."

"It can't be possible!" cried Gertrude. "She is the most dreadful flirt, Frank says, and is only amusing herself with him and would never think of marrying a minister, even if he wanted her, which Frank doesn't believe."

"I fancy she is quite in earnest at last," said Elinor. "She could hardly simulate such devotion as that, accomplished as she is in the art of make-believe."

"Yes; I think she is madly in love with him," said Lucile. "I've watched her at times. When he is around she is simply unconscious of everything else, and does not care who knows it."

"She is very peculiar about that, I think," said Elinor. "I should think she would have a little pride."

"She is past that. We all shall be like her when we are sufficiently infatuated, I suppose. Thank fortune I have not lost my heart yet. It's all I've got, though it is a poor one."

"But who would think Mr. Ray could possibly care for such a woman?" cried Gertrude, deeply shocked.

"Oh, men are slaves to a pretty face the world over; he's like his kind," said Lucile, disdainfully.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," answered Gertrude. "She will not make a good wife for Mr. Ray, or any man. And he will be so hurt, so disappointed, so crushed after a time. It's dreadful. I think some one ought to interfere." The girls laughed.

"Perhaps you would like the job. Just tell him you think it very unsuitable; do, dear."

Gertrude laughed and said: "I can't; but I'll try to make Frank. It's really too much of a sacrifice. Why couldn't he love Isabel, as he ought?"

"Isabel was made on purpose for him. It is flying in the face of Providence," said Lucile.

"That is the way it looks to outsiders," said Elinor; "but outsiders are never allowed to arrange these perfectly suitable and excellent matches. It might be better for the world if they were. The parties concerned don't seem to manage things very well."

"Don't you think Isabel is fond of him?" asked Gertrude, with real concern.

"It is very evident that she admires him much and likes him as a friend. She does not hesitate to let us all see that; but further it is hard to say. Isabel will not publish her preference to the world, as Imogene does."

"I thought at first that Mr. Ray really was charmed by Isabel, but when a girl throws herself at a man as Imogene has done, what can he do? He generally succumbs, doesn't he?"

"If he is not completely disgusted, which he is not very apt to be if she is very pretty and attractive, like Imogene."

"Well, I shall not believe it yet," said Gertrude. "Where did the news come from, Lucile?"

"Well, I was told by Jennie Root, who says that Imogene herself gives that impression to her friends. Jennie thinks there is no doubt about it."

"Write a poem of condolence, Lucile. Commiserate him for us."

"One would think we are all envious of her good fortune. I don't know but that I am," said Lucile. "My ideal has always been one of those elegant, dark fellows like Mr. Ray, with those dreadful, wicked eyes."

"Wicked eyes, indeed! You libel his eyes. They are magnificent, and not the least bit wicked," cried Gertrude.

"I will leave it to Elinor, who likes dark eyes, too—but likes them wicked."

"What can you mean by calling dark eyes wicked?" said Elinor. "Such faded blue as mine, or such dusky gray as yours, have quite as great possibilities in the way of wickedness, I think. And Mr. Ray's, particularly, are only deep and dreamy, and very, very fascinating, that is all." Was she thinking of other dark eyes as she spoke? Did she see the slumbering fire beneath those finely-chiseled lids, and the long, dark lashes that swept the cheeks as he played that day in the library? I am afraid she did, for they were seldom absent from her long.

When Frank came to luncheon, the matter was duly laid before him by three eager girls' voices, all talking at once; but he only laughed. "I don't know anything about it, you magpies; but I'll run around there and ask him at once, if it will ease your minds."

"Oh, tell us what you think."

"I've no right to think anything; but if one judges by his eyes, it is probably so. I certainly see him with her often; and frequently meet her servant coming from his house."

"That is what we have all thought," cried Lucile. "She has done the wooing, herself."

"The true principle, of course. If you want a thing well done, do it yourself. I envy Ray. I wish somebody would treat me that way. If they want me I just wish they would say so; it would be a great load off a fellow's mind, I assure you."

"But Frank, do tell us if you think Mr. Ray will marry Imogene."

"More than likely. She is just his style, I think."

"Oh, you tease," cried Gertrude. "When I know I have heard you say you thought he had a great liking for Isabel."

"So he has. So have I, and you, and all of us, but we can't all marry her. Besides, not many people marry from mere liking."

"And you think he is not in love with her?"

"Scarcely. She won't let him be. A man wants a little encouragement. He can't throw himself against an irresponsive statue. He is afraid of getting hurt. She ought to hold out her arms to him."

"Like Imogene?"

"Yes, of course. She understands the trick."

"She ought to, she's tried it often enough."

"We are all very uncharitable," said Elinor. "I think we had better take Shakespeare's advice and 'turn our eyes toward the napes of our necks, and make an interior survey of our good selves.'"

"Perhaps we shouldn't be very much flattered with the view. 'Show virtue her own feature; scorn her own image,'" cried Lucile; and then they dropped the subject.

After Elinor had given them some music, Frank exclaimed, in unlucky man fashion, "And why don't we have that evening over at Isabel's, and more of the professor's fine music? I have been quite anticipating the treat. He doesn't play that way everywhere. By the way, you heard him at Madame La Forge's, Elinor. Did you ever hear anything quite equal to that music? It has fairly haunted me ever since. I was so sorry Gertrude and Lucile could not hear it."

Elinor had flushed a good deal when he began to speak, but she had time to recover herself, and answered, quite coolly, "Yes, that was very remarkable music, and very masterly execution."

No more was said about Isabel's intended party. Gertrude knew why it did not take place, and changed the subject; and Elinor soon after took her leave. Frank announced his intention of remaining at home the rest of the day, and the three prepared to spend a quiet afternoon in the library, where a fire blazed brightly on the hearth. But Gertrude was in and out, staying with her mother a good deal — by accident or choice — and the visit was practically a long tete-a-tete between Lucile and Frank, which both seemed to enjoy, for they had not seen much of each other of late. Frank must show her all his new art treasures, and must sit quite near her to do so, and sometimes the heads were very close together, for Frank must see, too, though Lucile was so near-sighted; and sometimes the hands would meet in a momentary touch when handling prints, as is often the case.

Frank wished to speak seriously to her then and there, but he was afraid of being premature, even if she would ever care for him; but he could not refrain from saying jestingly: "Why don't you treat me as Imogene does Mr. Ray, Lucile? It would be very lovely of you, and you know how much I would like it," teasingly.

"I would if I wanted you," she replied, with her usual blunt frankness, only she softened it with a laugh, and added: "Don't be absurd, dear old Frank. You know I like you more than anyone else in the world, except Gertrude."

"But I don't want you to like me so well."

"Then I'll try to hate you as you desire, but I'm really afraid I can't. You're not a bit hateful, but you would be foolish if I would let you."

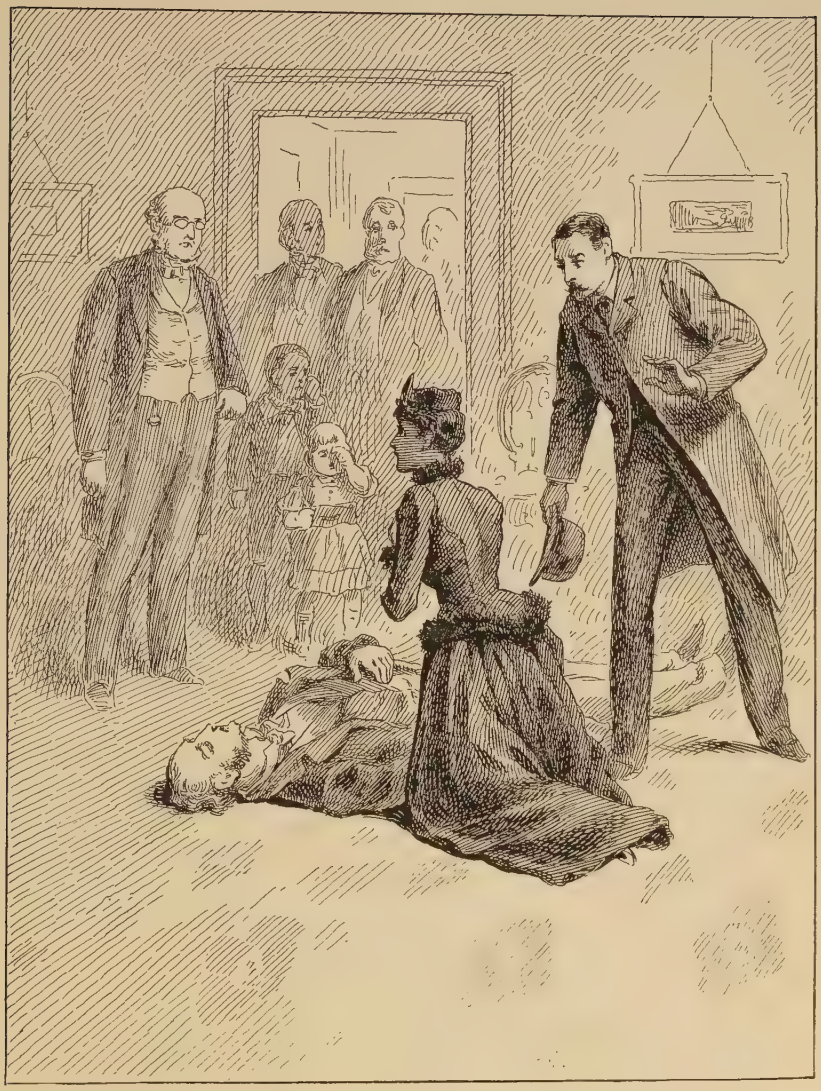
"Won't you ever let me?"

"Ever is a very long time. What is the name of this? It's a lovely head, isn't it?"

Frank sighed, but turned back to the prints, and in a little while they were back on the old ground of good comradeship. In the course of the afternoon she showed him her later letters from Arthur Stanley, which she had brought for Gertrude to read, and he thought he detected in them an intense personal interest, and, in her manner in regard to them, the same vivid, almost irrepressible, longing to meet face to face. It must be before long now, and Frank dreaded, yet desired it, above all things, for the issue of that meeting, he was sure, would decide his fate. But he was very gloomy over the prospect.

When Lucile reached home that evening, accompanied by Frank, they found the house in a state of the wildest excitement. The children were running wildly to and fro, strange men went in and out, and the utmost confusion prevailed everywhere. "Oh, what can have happened?" cried Lucile, in breathless fear and agitation, clinging to Frank's arm and beginning to cry. He put his arm protectingly around her, before he answered: "Nothing very bad, I hope."

But his own sense of dread and foreboding of evil was equal to her own. He hesitated a moment before entering, dreading the shock which he feared awaited his little friend. How he wished she had this day given him the right to protect her, to shield her, to surround her with the comfort of his love. But this she had not done, and he hardly felt that he had the right to penetrate into this new evil, whatever it might be. But he pushed bravely on, and, as they entered the house, they saw Mr. Layton lying prone upon the floor, with a doctor bending over him. Lucile did not faint or shriek as he feared she would, but ran swiftly and knelt down by her father, exclaiming quickly:



"LUCILE RAN SWIFTLY AND KNELT DOWN BY HER FATHER."

"Oh, father, what is it?"

"It is apoplexy, my child," replied the doctor, very gently; "your father is dead."

"No; he cannot, cannot be dead!" she cried, wildly, throwing herself beside him and covering his face with kisses. "Do something for him, quick, quick—my father cannot, cannot be dead!"

All the children began to cry loudly at this, and Mrs. Layton was already in hysterics in the next room, so that, after a moment's giving way, Lucile controlled herself and rose up to try to quiet the cries of the children. She took the youngest in her arms and coaxed the boys out of the room, where Frank followed them and sought to engage their attention in the telling of the story of their father's attack, while Lucile went to her mother and undertook the seemingly hopeless task of quieting her uncontrollable agitation. The doctor came to her assistance in this, and in half an hour comparative quiet reigned. Men who were strange to Lucile, but who were her father's friends, began to fill the house, and there were many tears shed and much rough sympathy expressed by all for the afflicted family. Frank was new to such scenes and much overcome by the horror of it all; but his one thought was of Lucile and how to save her from needless suffering. She felt it a comfort that he was there; but no small, sad detail was spared to her that night. She was the head of the family now, and to her all questions were put—of her all needed superintendence was expected. With the little child in her arms—for the baby would not leave her for a moment—she went to and fro, and did whatever was required of her; with great calmness, too, after the first outburst of feeling. She felt the weight of the new responsibility already, and it steadied her and made her nerves grow firm.

After a couple of hours, when the dead man was laid out, the mother asleep, and the children at last disposed of, she turned her white, still face up to Frank, who stood over her as she sank into a chair, exhausted, saying only: "Oh, Frank!" but in it there was the cry of a stricken heart. "Poor child," he said, as he knelt down beside her, feeling an infinite compassion in his heart. "Poor little thing; what shall I do with you now?"

"Oh Frank, I cannot be taken care of now: now I must take care of the rest."

"Do not think of that to-night, dearest. Let me make you comfortable somewhere, and give you a little of your mother's medicine, so that you may go to sleep."

"I do not feel that I shall ever sleep again," she said, wearily, looking at him with wide-open, solemn eyes. "Do people ever sleep with such trouble as this upon them?"

"Yes dear, people must sleep to live, and they live through trials as great as this."

"Think of my mother. What shall I do with my mother?" and she lost herself again and began to sob.

The woman who was staying with her mother entered the room now and tried to persuade Lucile to retire to her room, urging upon her the need of strength for the morrow, but the most she could be persuaded to do was to lie upon the couch in the room where they were, to be near her mother when she awoke.

Frank, who insisted upon staying the rest of the night, retired to the next room, while the neighbor undertook to sleep in her chair. What a night it was! Frank never forgot it. It was his first experience of the hard realities of life, realities which had pressed upon poor, tender Lucile from her earliest remembrance. She had never known what it was to be free from

care and worry, even as a very little child. And the dread of some such dire calamity as this had darkened many of these last youthful years.

Over such a man as Mr. Layton had been, there hangs always the shadow of an impending doom. Sometimes long years pass before the blow falls, as in this case, but child as Lucile was, she was not ignorant of the fate of a man who steadily pursues a deadly habit—she had seen too many examples of it, in her brief life, among the class of men to which her father belonged. Conviviality and self-indulgence demand their heavy penalty of all who yield to them, and sooner or later that penalty must be paid. Fate is merciful when that doom comes suddenly, in such wise as this to-night, —merciful even to family and friends, shocking as the sudden death always is. Beside the dreadful slow tortures to which some drinking men and their families are subjected, this horror of sudden death is but a troubled dream. And yet Lucile had always shuddered at the bare possibility. Now she found herself face to face with the dire reality. Now had the strong man gone, with no provision for the helpless family, or so little that it seemed none in the eyes of careful men, and leaving the burden he should have carried on the weak shoulders of a child. This is where cowardly self-indulgence lands a man at last, even one as kind as this father had been when at his best, and as capable of making name and place for himself in the world. This possibility was what had filled him with unspeakable remorse, during all these later years, since he had realized it, and driven him to even greater indulgence to drown its gnawings. In the solemn watches of many a sleepless night, he had foreseen this inevitable end, and had shrunk in dire dismay from the thought of those who would be left to face the

consequences of his criminal folly. He had resolved, then re-resolved, then died the same.

The sweet girl he had married always seemed at these times to reproach him with his recreancy, the beautiful and gifted daughter of whom he was so proud seemed to add her voice of sorrowful blame, and the younger children to swell the wild lament. It almost maddened him to see this even in imagination, and he would rise up and flee to the accursed drink again, to drown the vision. Years ago, before the poison had entirely enthralled him, and his brain was still capable of some healthy action, he would promise amendment, and try through fiendish tortures to keep his high resolve—but the fatal fascination was too strong for his will, and again and again he surrendered, after manful struggles. Now the last fight had been fought; he had met the last defeat; for good or for ill the earthly account had been closed, and the angel had written *Finis* on the last blotted page of his book of life. He had missed the Fortunate Isles of life, aye, had been wrecked upon their inhospitable sands; but who dares to say that the little gleam of light in his soul as he went down, his steadfast love of wife and child, shall not yet broaden into boundless day? Must we not if we would live "trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill?"

Frank Dana pondered on these things in awful earnestness as he kept his solitary vigil that solemn night, as young souls must everywhere ponder when they come upon the awful problem of evil, which we are all called upon to face. But through awful questioning and struggle, "at last he beat his music out," and came forth with stronger faith and higher purpose than before, as it befalls most souls "perplext in thought, but pure in deed." And what a helper he became to the helpless family, over which

he now kept guard in the weary time that followed. With no other friend to whom to turn, Lucile gladly, at his request, left everything to him, and, in his gentle, thoughtful way, everything was done that could in any way add to her comfort or free her from the smallest burden. For a few weeks she rested as he bade her, and took no thought of the morrow, merely bearing her own grief silently and supporting her mother under her heavy affliction. Then she began to rouse a little, and to ask herself what she was to do—how carry this responsibility which had been laid upon her. And no answer seemed to come to her from all the wide, wide world.

But after the most laborious and humiliating haunting of the newspaper offices, and after rebuffs which would have discouraged the most pushing of young writers, she succeeded in finding work which, for a time, would yield her the sum of ten dollars a week. Whether it should last long and whether it should grow into something better, depended entirely upon whether she could continue to please an exacting and despotic editor, who cared only for something which would "take" with his readers. For the best work which she could do he cared nothing. But he had seen some light and breezy little articles of hers, written when she was happy and in high spirits, that had struck him as having the quality he desired in contributions; and if she could manage to strike and keep that vein her fortune would be made—for the sum of ten dollars a week seemed like that to her in her present helpless state. A life insurance policy of five thousand dollars had been found, as her father's sole provision for the family, but even this had been an unexpected treasure, and was felt to be a blessing, great indeed. Frank Dana had offered to take the money and to pay ten per cent. for its use, although six or seven per cent. was the highest rate received by most lenders at that

time. Frank would have said twenty per cent. just as readily if he had dared; but he was afraid that even such inexperienced financiers as Mrs. Layton and Lucile would suspect such an offer as this. As it was, they thankfully accepted his offer, and had no thought of being overpaid.

It is such ignorance of financial affairs as this that leaves helpless women the prey of dishonest men everywhere. Tempting rates of interest, with poor, or even false security, have been the ruin of many widows and orphans, and will continue to be so until all women everywhere learn to study into business matters for themselves and not trust the first man who happens to be at hand in a crisis. In these days of the higher education of women, with all their learning, they should get wisdom of the practical kind in regard to their own financial interests. Without this the most highly educated woman of all is at a great disadvantage in the fierce struggle of the business world, and will be pushed to the wall by the most ignorant sharper in the community if circumstances throw her in his way. Lucile learned many practical lessons, even in the first few weeks of her new responsibilities, as all women who can reason and think at all do learn when called to the helm, but the learning was very distasteful to her; nor would she ever learn to enjoy a business life, as many do who are forced into it reluctantly at first.

In her state of sorrowful worry, her forced literary work was very hard, and she thought sometimes she could do altogether uncongenial work with less strain than this new work called for. To be gay and dashing, to jest and satirize, to startle and amuse, all this was hard to one who only wished to sit alone with her sorrowful thoughts, or to bask in the congenial society of old friends. But she put her whole soul into it and astonished herself, as well as her friends, by her success. Herr Hardige had

been among her best friends since her trial. He had discovered that she had a rare voice, strong and sweet at the same time, and he was anxious she should turn her attention to music, as offering a better pecuniary opening than literature. Although not a vocal teacher by profession, he knew how to train a voice as well as the best, and insisted upon giving Lucile lessons for the present. In a little while he was sure she could take a fine position as a choir singer and make a more easy and secure living for herself than in the precarious literary work she was fond of. Lucile gladly attempted what he wished, and spent as much time as she could afford upon the practice he required.

In this way she became intimately associated with his life, and learned to know him better, perhaps, than any woman had yet known him. She soon became one of his most enthusiastic admirers, and, like Isabel, praised him almost too constantly to Elinor, who enjoyed his praises, but who felt they were a sort of reproach to her, nevertheless. Mr. Ray, too, and the Danas, seldom lost an opportunity of complimenting him, and altogether she was almost inclined to suspect them of a conspiracy against her—yet a conspiracy which she loved.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends and after weep their dust."
—*All's Well That Ends Well.*

MR. RAY had never failed to make frequent calls upon Isabel, and to enjoy them in somewhat varying fashion. Isabel seemed to him to be a person of moods, although she had never had that reputation among her other friends; but she was certainly rather capricious in her treatment of Mr. Ray. At first she had been more uniform in her cordial welcome and bright, vivacious manner. He had learned to value her quick smile, her hearty hand-grasp and steady flow of flashing though earnest speech, and to quite look forward to these visits as a great relief from the monotony and insipidity of other calls. But of late he had thought her manner changed, her spirits flagging, and her warm interest in him abating. She was dignified, and even distant, in her manner to him, especially in public. She seldom gave him her hand in greeting, but only a bow and smile—the smile even seeming half-hearted at times. He was much puzzled over this change, and racked his brain vainly trying to discover how he could have offended or estranged her.

She was just as active and interested as at first in all his work, and her influence was extending itself noticeably in all directions, as people learned her efficiency and good judgment; while the butterflies who had been very zealous at first were, one by

one, falling away, as he had expected. It gratified him very much to have this most efficient of his aides, not only to remain steadfast, but increase in power and usefulness, and not even to fall off in enthusiasm. He was thinking of all this as he walked toward Mr. Logan's house one day, soon after Isabel, like the rest of the world, had heard the rumor of his engagement to Imogene Willis; and he continued to ponder it, as he waited for a moment in the parlor for Isabel to appear. She had received the announcement of his waiting below with a little start and frown, and came down the stairs half reluctantly, and in no haste. She looked very pretty in a house dress of blue, with silver embroidery, and a slight flush was on her face as she entered the room. She did not go toward him as she would have done a few weeks before, but greeted him rather formally from the door as she came in.

But he had determined to overcome her reserve this morning if possible, and, although somewhat chilled by her reception, went forward toward her with outstretched hand. "Hand-shaking is a good fashion, Miss Logan. Don't let the fashion change for friends."

She smiled, and gave him her hand frankly, which he held a moment as he continued: "There is real inspiration in it for me, and I can't bear this new whim of the world that would abandon it; nor would I have thought you would fall in with it so easily."

Her eyes fell as he looked down into them inquiringly, and she disengaged her hand rather abruptly, saying: "Oh, I like to shake hands with my friends if they wish it; but as so many people do not do it now, it is easy to abandon the habit."

She sat down upon a sofa, and, instead of resuming the seat he had risen from when she entered, he seated himself beside

her, saying: "May I?" and smiling. "I hate to be kept at arms-length by all my friends, Miss Logan, because of my cloth. Why don't people treat me like a human being, and not like a minister?"

"Isn't a minister a human being?" she asked, laughing, but in some embarrassment.

"Well, scarcely, I think, in the minds of most people. Men, women and ministers, I think, is the classification they make, and the minister is somewhere between a man and that nondescript thing, an angel."

"Exceedingly complimentary."

"Altogether too much so. I, for one, don't like to be relegated to such a state. There is nothing about me to warrant it. I'm very, very human, and I like to be treated like my fellow-sinners, and not stood on a pedestal like a statue of bronze. I don't get a bit of rational conversation once a month; but as soon as I appear everybody gets on to stilts, and try to talk about things they neither know nor care about."

"I'll be very careful. What would you like to talk about to-day? Shall we discuss the Andover controversy?" she asked, mockingly.

"No; nor the missionary movement, nor the last sermon or church entertainment. Let us talk about ourselves first, and then about our friends. The first subject is always interesting, and I think you might make the last one so, if you would. I'm very fond of gossip, and I know you must have a lot of interesting things which are concealed from the minister as being too trivial for his great mind. My great mind is only a thing of hearsay. I can't make it materialize at all. I'm immensely interested in trifles."

"Tell me some of the things you want to know. I can't be expected to divine what a little mind would like—from my height."

"What has Mrs. Martin named the baby?"

"Cordelia, I believe."

"I hope the child will live; but 'Cordelia' will be something of a mill-stone around its neck, won't it?"

"No indeed; all of those old, stately names are coming in again. Perhaps you would have preferred Regan or Goneril?'

"Heaven forbid! but in the days of Lear they didn't have so many names to choose from. Cordelia might have been excusable then."

"Any further questions?"

"Don't make me ask questions like an interviewer, but tell me the news. How do Miss Layton and Frank Dana get along? and why don't Miss Lewis let up on the poor professor? and why do you treat me so shamefully yourself?" He laughed, as he said this, and peered round into her face. Isabel changed color and was much confused, which made him laugh more than ever, and cry: "Answer categorically, now, and don't skip the most important, as witnesses are apt to."

"I treat you far beyond your deserts, and I haven't anything new to tell you of our friends. Perhaps you can tell me something; you see more of the professor and Frank than I do."

"Yes; but they are afraid of me because of my supposed wings; they put a misfit sort of halo around my head, and don't credit me with any human interest in their affairs. It's shameful, and I won't stand it much longer, any more than I will your conduct."

"I hear that the professor is a constant visitor of Lucile. Perhaps he has changed his mind and transferred his allegiance."

"Not he; but what a lovely thing if it had happened that way in the beginning. Genius should wed genius. Neither of them should have a commonplace mate."

"Elinor is not commonplace, I assure you. She has not Lucile's special talent, to be sure; but she has infinite variety, which, I think, will be more agreeable in a life companion."

"Very true; one needs to think of what a long time a life is in those things, and not of what will please one for a day. The professor himself will never weary one—he will be a constant sensation. I almost envy the woman who marries him. He will be a sauce piquant for one lifetime, at least."

"And so will Lucile, in her way. I know one man at least who would envy you if you could secure her favor."

"Poor Frank; but he'll win yet, I judge. Don't you think so?"

"He ought, certainly; but I think Lucile has some romantic sort of a regard for Arthur Stanley, which interferes with her real liking for Frank. Frank would make her supremely happy, I think, if she would forego that foolishness."

"Does it strike you as foolishness? He is a very brilliant fellow, I hear."

"Oh yes, indeed, but it seems foolishness to me, for her to imagine she loves him, when she has never even seen him. How can she know that she will not even dislike him, personally? We dislike many men who are brilliant intellectually."

"Frank is a man of excellent parts himself, but he is so social and genial and fun-loving that people are apt to think only of that side of his character. He has fine taste and excellent judgment—as his sister also has, I judge."

"Yes indeed, Gertrude may be said to be perfect in both particulars. She is one of the girls whom all women rave over."

"You are very complimentary to all your friends. I don't think you have under-rated one. What do you think of Miss Willis?" He asked it as nonchalantly as possible, and toyed with Isabel's sash-fringe as he spoke.

"I think her an exceedingly beautiful girl."

"Is that all?"

"Well, to be frank, that is all I know of her. She is not one of my friends, like the others, you understand."

"But you surely must be able to say more than that about her from general observation."

Isabel was much annoyed. "If you want me to praise her I might add that she dresses exquisitely, and has a charming manner."

"Is that damning with faint praise, or what would you call it?" he cried, laughing like a boy.

"These are excellent things to say of a woman — the most important thing of all in the eyes of the world. I don't think I can conscientiously add that she is a genius, if that is what you desire."

"Nor even that she is a saint? You are not as generous as I thought you. You have favorites, but the outside barbarians may shift for themselves." Where this raillery might have led if continued it is hard to say, but it was interrupted just here by a servant, who showed Elinor Lewis in. Isabel rose to meet her and when she seated herself again it was by Elinor's side. Mr. Ray soon took leave, and when he was gone Elinor made some laughing allusion to the proximity of the couple when she entered.

"Oh, it was purely accidental," replied Isabel, "he was merely asking me my opinion of his fiancée, and he came close because it was such a confidential subject, I suppose."

"Is it really true, then?" asked Elinor, in undisguised disgust, "I was never more astonished in my life, than when I heard it."

"People are always astonished at any new engagement, I believe, but the majority of them turn out fairly well, after all."

"Yes, it seems a miracle that it should be so, particularly when engagements are made at so youthful an age as they are in many cases."

"There is some sort of affinity, I suppose, which brings the right natures together. I dislike the word, but one can't get on without the idea, in treating of this subject. Mr. Ray, probably, like most men, wants a woman to be lost in him, so chose one of the kind that can be so lost. Do you remember the song in 'The Princess'—

> 'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
> And slips into the bosom of the lake;
> So fold thyself, my dearest, there, and slip
> Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

How does that strike you, Elinor?"

"As the most arrogant nonsense on the part of the man. I should like to see the man I would be willing to lose myself in. And I dislike just as much all that follows in the poem about coming down from the mountain height, for love is of the valley."

"Some love may be of the valley, but there is a pleasure that lives in height, despite the fact—'in height and cold and splendor of the hills.' Don't you think so?"

"Indeed I do. I could not have a love that I had to come down to from my height. Better to stay on the height, I say, even if love never found one there. One could at least be happy in the altitude, and comfort oneself with listening 'where every sound is sweet;' could hearken to

'Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.' "

"Yes, that would be better than much that one would get in the valley, even if one did get the love, considered so indispensable by the sentimental world. Don't you think it a very sentimental world, as a whole, Isabel?"

"Yes, there seems to be a prevailing opinion that love is about all there is of life. Even Mrs. Browning makes her grand 'Aurora Leigh' to say:

'Art is much, but love is more,
Art symbolizes heaven, but love is God and makes heaven.'

"It strikes me that there may be a life very happy and very useful apart from all this. But people never seem to be satisfied with their lives if they miss this one thing."

"Neither are they satisfied with them if they happen to secure the coveted blessing. The dissatisfaction is a part of life, I judge, and whether one has love, or has it not, the divine discontent continues. Some of the most unhappy people I know have made ideal love matches, or what were thought so by themselves at the time. To be sure, the most of them have recovered from the delusion."

"Well, the ideal marriage is denied to many, at the best, and for those there should be some compensation, and probably there is, in their greater freedom and opportunity in life. They can live a wider life, if less satisfactory to the affections. But the affectionate nature is very clamorous in most of us, and very rebellious if denied full sway. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I am quite disgusted with the fact. Why can't we be contented with other things, and leave this troublesome kind of love out of the calculation entirely? I think it would be much

nicer. I don't want to love anybody in such violent fashion that I can't be happy without his love, if my reason says that is best."

"Nor I; but

'How is it under our control
To love, or not to love?' "

"I am bound that it shall be under my control, and I am sure you are stronger than I. All we have to do is to trample the world's sentimentality under our feet. It's easy enough."

"But it must be easier to bear one's own trouble than to have to wound another?"

"You are right; it is hard to hurt a friend, even when you know it is best even for him. Sometimes that almost breaks me down."

Suddenly she seemed to realize that she was saying too much, and rose hurriedly to go. She kissed Isabel in considerable agitation, said "You're a brave girl and a splendid," and went away.

When she was gone Isabel pondered long over her interview with Mr. Ray. He evidently had noticed the distance at which she held him, and wished to break down the barrier she kept between them; but for what reason? Had she treated him with too great coldness, and might things have been different with them if she had yielded to the natural impulse to be more warm and friendly? Why did he care now, if he had decided to accept the adoration of another? She could not believe him to be one of those men who wish all women everywhere to bow at their shrine. Probably the whole interview was only an outlet for his good spirits, and meant nothing—was mere thoughtless jesting. But somehow it disturbed her, and when she went back to her room and undertook to continue the work she was engaged in, when interrupted by his call, she found herself unable to do

anything; and, taking a book, leaned back and tried to read, with swift tears rolling down her cheeks. She still felt the thrill of the warm hand-pressure he had given her; she could not banish the dark eyes that still seemed to be looking into hers, and she felt far more unreconciled to fate than before he had come to disturb her. Why did he not leave her in peace—why should he disturb her thus? Then her thoughts wandered to Elinor, and she wondered how her friend could allow pride or even parental interference to separate her from so great a blessing as was offered her in the passionate love of such a man as Herr Hardige. She could not comprehend it. How gladly would she sacrifice everything for the rapture of such devotion.

Then she wondered if all love was lavished in such cruel fashion as among her friends. Cross-purposes everywhere, it seemed, and no happy issue for any. She repeated to herself a verse from one of Lucile's poems, and wondered if it could be true:

> "Learn that love itself is blessing,
> And its best estate is oft
> Simply loving—not possessing."

She wondered if Lucile believed that, and what had been the experience which led to its being written. She was not in the mood for self-abnegation. She did not believe the cynical things Elinor had said, nor did she think Elinor had believed them. She was not a brave girl, as Elinor had said, nor was she likely to obtain the resignation predicted. Her heart was rebellious, hot, tumultuous, and oh, so heavy! How could she ever live if all life was to be as hard as this? She cried passionately, for a long while, not even in time and distance seeing a gleam of comfort, as an older heart had done. Oh, these first sorrows of youth!—how bitter they are, how pitiful! Before the heart has grown accustomed to pain, and the eyes to tears, how these first

griefs seize upon the expectant heart, slay sweet hope, and inflict scars that remain even when the first wild pain is dead. The sorrows of age can never have in them quite the heart-break of youth. Isabel was very restless for the next few days and impatient for the Sabbath, which was the white day of the week for her. When it came she was astonished at her own excited state of feeling. She could hardly wait for the hour of service to arrive, and when she was seated in her pew how eagerly she watched for the appearance of him in whom every thought was centered. How beautiful he was in her eyes—like Saul, than his brethren taller and fairer. How pale his forehead, how glowing his eyes, how illuminated the face from within. How the music thrilled her as the organ poured forth its great volume of sound, and how the voices of the whole great congregation mingled with it. Mr. Ray, unlike many other ministers, knew a good hymn, and the one they sang this morning was deep, strong, grand, like the voice of the sea. It had a powerful effect upon many others beside Isabel, as hymns should and would have if feelingly sung by great numbers, anywhere. He knew, also, what to read for a Scripture lesson, and how to read it. The grand poetry of the Old Testament lost nothing in his rendering, and stirred the hearts of the people as they should be stirred by this part of the service—so often a mere perfunctory thing. How simple and brief the prayer—a mere petition for help and guidance, addressed by a child to its Father, but felt to be real and from the heart by every person within hearing. "Keep us," it ended, "our feet from falling, our eyes from tears, our souls from death."

How the words lingered in the memory and echoed in the heart of at least one of his hearers. "Our eyes from tears"—how could that be, she queried, in a world like this? How the

pain pressed down deeper into the heart as she listened, and felt how far away he must always be from her life, when she felt such consciousness within that she alone could really understand him in all the the heights and depths of his nature, really give to him that full sympathy of thought and feeling, so necessary to his highest good and highest happiness, really appreciate every varying shade of his thought and his emotion. She knew that she could do this. She knew herself *en rapport* with his every mood, able to follow his most elusive thought, able to know all he felt before he was himself fairly conscious of his changing feeling—she knew this to-day better than ever before, though she had felt it all from the very beginning of their acquaintance. But to what purpose was all this subtle mixture of natures, to what purpose this blending of very soul with soul, if it was recognized by but one—if the other was satisfied to have the mere devotion of a doll, whose nature could not comprehend his own in even the remotest degree, to whom he must always stoop, of whom he could ask nothing of real appreciation or real sympathy, but only the capricious liking of a child, liable to change and transfer its ardent devotion to a new object at any time?

There was such bitterness in the thought that Isabel felt it intolerable and tried fiercely to escape from it, but it held her in its unrelenting grip both now and for much future time.

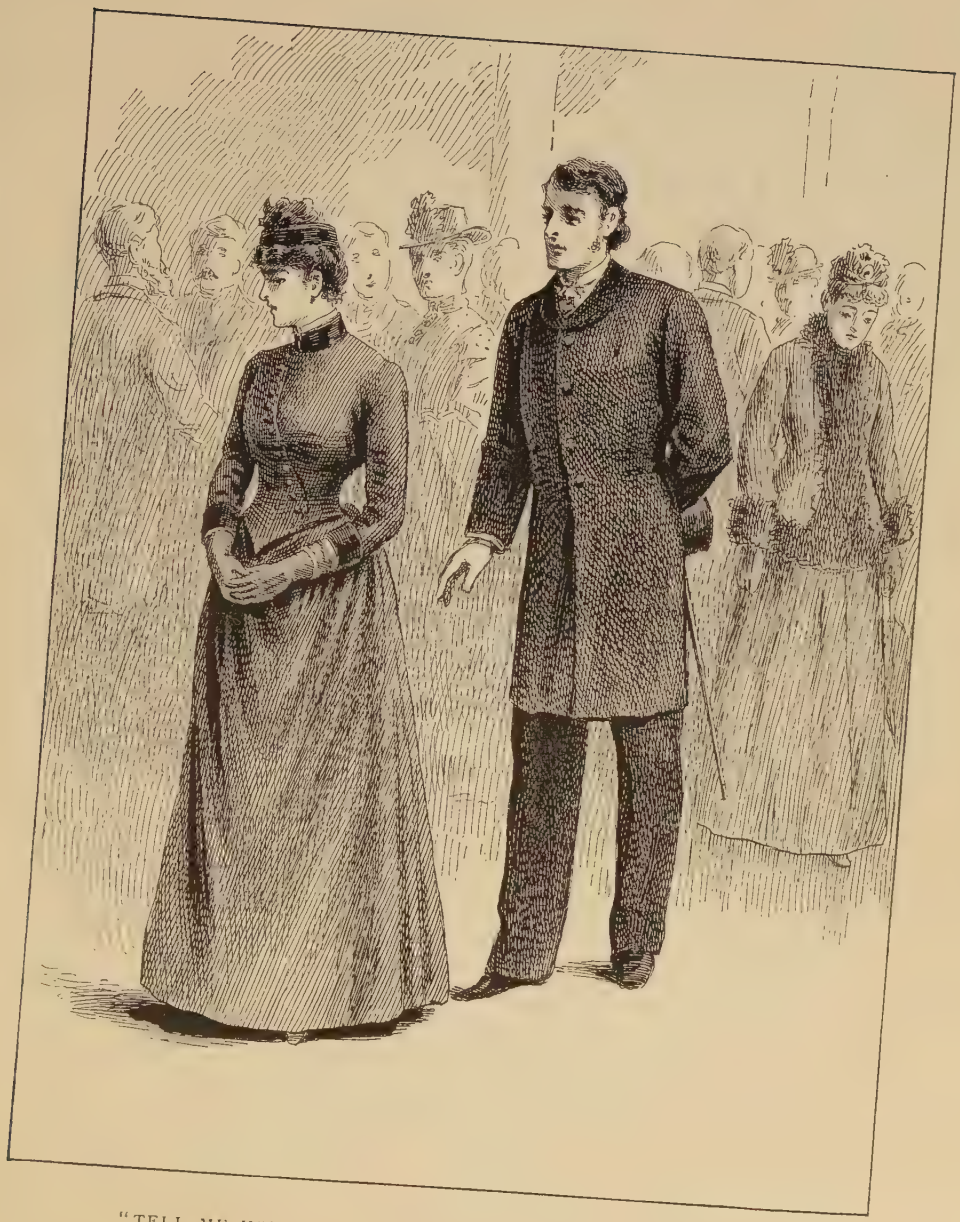
Alas, have we not all felt it! this sadness of the seemingly inevitable earthly putting asunder of that which God has joined together? Knows not every heart this old bitterness, has any one escaped the thought that to him all things are denied, while to those who value not, all things are given? When after service she sought her class room she was in such an over-

wrought state of feeling, that tears would spring to her eyes when Mr. Ray approached her and said, "Tell me how I preached this morning, Miss Isabel."

"You preached into the heart of things, as you always do, Mr. Ray," she answered, turning away as the tears fell.

"Was there something in it for you, then?" he said, in a tone of vibrating sympathy, greatly astonished at emotion in one so apparently cold and self-contained as Isabel.

"Yes, there was something in it for me," she said, and hastily turned away to seek her class. Mr. Ray could not forget the look he had never seen upon her face before, so tender and so rapt.



"TELL ME HOW I PREACHED THIS MORNING, MISS ISABEL."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Oh what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him that bears it."

—*As You Like It.*

ELINOR LEWIS also went home that day with a heart that was heavy despite her brave words. She had struggled with herself these many weeks, trying to convince herself that all was well with her, or soon would be; that she did not mourn the lost companionship, but only missed the music and the work; that her own wishes agreed substantially with those of her father, and that in a little while even the musician himself would cease to feel a pang at remembrance of her, and of his folly. She preached this doctrine diligently to herself at all hours, occupied her time as fully as possible with other things, and fancied, at times, she was making headway against her infatuation, as she always, in her own mind, designated this new unwelcome feeling; but, in her heart of hearts, she knew that this feeling was a woman's first strong, deep love, given to a worthy object, and of which she had no need to feel ashamed; that she was not overcoming it by absence and denial, and of late she had begun to fear that she should never thus overcome it. She realized how she missed him from her life, how great a place he had occupied in her thoughts, how tenderly she yearned toward him from her distance. She realized what he had become to her every time any other gentleman offered her any

particular attention, for she was beautiful and attractive, and not without many admirers. She felt a sort of scorn of all others since she had known this man—so different from the rest of the world. When she thought of the heights of intellectual enjoyment to which he had led her, of the world of beauty he had opened to her, both in music and in literature, of the high converse they had held, of his intuitive appreciation of all the best there was within her, how could she descend to the level of the men who were about her, with their foolish chatter, or dazed admiration of herself? This man had been her master, and had not groveled at her feet.

He had led her, not she him, as she must the others; he had grappled her soul to his by hooks of steel. It was not for her to say whether she should love or should not love — the loving had accomplished itself. How she should undo that loving was the only question now. Did she wish to undo it? She asked herself this question seriously this afternoon — heretofore she had played at answering it in the affirmative.

To-day she forced herself to answer it truthfully, once for all, and the answer was reversed. She was fain to own that she would not part with it if she could. The sweetness of this cup was too bewildering—she would not put it from her, but she would hide it in her own heart and let no man know. Pride should still hold the citadel, although the city had surrendered. But how she longed to-day to give him she loved some sign. How sweet to see the light leap into his eye and flood his face, as she knew it would flood it, at but a word! How passing sweet to have him once more at her side, to give him the hope by which a man can live! But would he come? Could she recall him if she would? She had to take account of a pride for which her own was a poor match; of a sense of wrong which

did her injustice, perhaps, but was very real and would be hard to dispel; and of that feeling of hurt dignity, so powerful in one who is considered an inferior by the world. She did not know how powerful her influence might be; but if she yielded sufficiently she thought he would return. But would she yield so entirely? Could she trample her pride in the dust and let him see she desired his continued friendship, his love, for she felt that it must come even to that. She did not answer that question to her own heart, but it kept sounding there and would not be put down.

She had met Herr Hardige but the one time since the parting so long ago in the library where she now sat; but she had seen his pale, wan face a few times in the street or at Mr. Ray's church, whither she went quite frequently of late, finding something humanly helpful there, as did many a sad, perplexed heart. But to-night she was invited to a party at her friend, Mrs. Lawrence's, where she had first met Herr Hardige, and Laura had informed her that the professor would furnish some music; that he had yielded after long solicitation, and quite reluctantly; which she thought was very ungrateful of him, as they had been the first friends he had had in the city, and done a great deal for him. Elinor was nervously anxious for the evening to come, and knew not how to pass the time otherwise than by dreaming here and occasionally playing snatches of the music he had been used to play. She remembered how he had played the 'Sonata Pathetique' that first day, and how insensible Laura had been, and she did not wonder he found it difficult to forgive her, and waste his music upon her friends; for, with the exception of Isabel and possibly Mr. Ray, she could think of no one who would be there who would appreciate it. Did he suspect that she would be there, and was that the reason of the reluctant consent?

Of course he would know she would be there, and how would he receive her? How should she receive him?

All sorts of idle fancies went through her mind as her fingers swept the keys—day dreams as fond and sweet as ever young heart dreamed, and which would often come back to her in the days that would be, as the first preludings of fate upon the harp of life before the real melody of her days began. When the evening fell she went up to her own room in a high, rapt mood, hardly taking note of passing things, and began to dress for the evening. She would be beautiful to-night, but not rich or magnificent. She laid out a white tulle, like a floating cloud, and some pale pink roses for ornaments, and did not wear a single gem, even removing her rings. In an hour she found herself waiting in Mrs. Lawrence's drawing-room in excited expectation. When he came he looked eagerly round the room, saw her at once, and went over to her, saying: "I was not mistaken, then. I said to myself you would come."

He offered his hand, and remained quite near to her after releasing hers, looking down into her eyes.

"Oh, you must have known I would not miss the music," she said.

"Yes; I know you really care for the music, but it is hard to be satisfied with that."

"But you will give me nothing else — will not even come to see me, or read with me any more. I miss the readings almost as much as the music."

"You are very kind, but not kind enough. I do not dare to come to you again, as you must know, though I have been bitterly angry with myself ever since I cut myself off from the opportunity. That was my vile temper, but I have paid dearly for indulging it. I drove myself out of Paradise and now an

angel with a flaming sword guards it, and I shall never be allowed to re-enter. It serves me right, but I am fiendishly miserable."

"That angel must be your own pride, I suppose."

"Perhaps yours, which will not allow you to ask me."

"Would you come for the asking, then?"

"Most of the time I am insane enough to do so, I think, but I have lucid intervals when I know it would be the extreme of folly."

Just then Mrs. Lawrence approached, and he left Elinor's side rather hastily, and began to greet other acquaintances. Then she pondered whether or no she would bid him to come back. As well as he, she knew it would be the extreme of folly, but she felt like casting upon him the responsibility of deciding whether all intercourse between them should cease henceforth. It would relieve her, she thought, and make her unhappiness more bearable, if she could feel that it was inevitable, and not through fault of her own. We always find excuses for doing what we wish to do, and almost certainly she knew now, that she should ask him to resume the lessons.

After the music Mrs. Lawrence, who was solicitous for Herr Hardige's pleasure, now that he had come, asked him to take Miss Lewis out to supper, as she knew of no other way of disposing of him, and thought that Elinor would be willing to be sacrificed. He followed her as she led the way to where Elinor was standing, though half reluctantly.

"I have asked Herr Hardige to escort you to supper, Elinor," she said significantly, conveying, as she supposed, in this remark the information that she expected Elinor to take him off her hands for the rest of the evening.

"I shall be most happy," she answered, formally, and the professor offered his arm. He led her to a seat that was placed in a deep window, half concealed by a curtain, and where they would be practically alone. As he did so the words of his favorite poet passed through his mind:

> "Sometimes we are devils to ourselves,
> When we will tempt the frailty of our powers."

They were both electrically stirred by the opportunity thus given them for confidential talk, and for a few moments said nothing, each too conscious of what momentous things might hang upon the interview; but after a little they began to talk of indifferent things, each trying to keep fate at bay a little longer. They sat a long time—until the dining-room had become almost empty—and then she made a move to rise. He felt that he might never be so near her again in thought and feeling as at this hour, for she was all softness and yielding to-night, but he still hesitated to imperil all by speech. But as she took his offered arm, he laid his hand lightly upon hers as it lay there, and, looking at her with glowing eyes, said: "And are you not going to ask me to come back?"

"Yes; I do ask you. Will you come?" she answered, in a low, but agitated voice.

"You know what it means to come back?" still more passionately.

"Yes; I know, I think," she faltered.

"And you wish it?" pressing the hand beneath his own.

"Yes; I think to-night I do wish it," she said softly.

"Then I will come."

Then as in a dream they went back to the company, but they could not remain there, and soon took leave, going their different ways as in a trance.

"ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ASK ME TO COME BACK?"

When Elinor reached her own room she could hardly realize what she had said and done. It seemed that it had not been herself, but another, who had sat there in the curtained nook, and said those fateful words. She trembled as she recalled them, and thought of all they must mean to her; was so affrighted at their import that her heart beat with such violence that she pressed her hands against it for relief. For the first time to-day she thought of her father and of his displeasure, and her agitation increased with every moment. How rash she had been, at the end of all these months of coolness and restraint — how fatally rash, she feared, both for herself and him. For if he came now, her father must be told, and she knew beforehand his exasperation, and his dreadful disappointment in her and her trusted discretion. And when her lover came to know, as he must know, the attitude of the father, what must she expect from his proud and sensitive nature? Only pain and evil could come to both, she feared, as the outcome of this yielding mood of hers. But would she undo her work if she could? Would she recall the one rapturous moment which had been theirs? Would she not rather that he should know what was in her heart, even if they should be outwardly separated, as she feared? She felt that she would — that he must be happier to know, that she must be happier to have him know; and spite of all her fears, she could not but own that she was very happy now.

The next day, as she expected, though no such arrangement had been made, he appeared, at rather an early hour, and she received him as usual in the library. There was a repressed excitement about both, which tried to hide itself under a return to their ordinary demeanor at such times. They went through the usual morning greetings, when he seated himself at once at

the piano and began playing, and talking of what she should do now, in the way of new music. Then after a little while she took her place at the piano, and the lesson was given much as usual, though this vein of excited feeling ran through everything. When the lesson was over, he sat down again at the instrument and played for some time—softly, sweetly—a divine melody, born of his new joy, a song without words which had never been heard before. When that was done he went over and sat beside her on the sofa where she had been listening, and, taking her hand in his own, said, "You do not repent?"

Despite all her night's fears and worries she felt able to say, quite truthfully, "No, I do not repent. And you?"

"I have repented all night that I did not make you promise more, while you were in the mood. Are you still in the disposition to make me happy, or will you cast me down, this morning, to the black depths where I have lately been?"

"You cast yourself into them before—it was not I who did it."

"But you would not put out a hand to hold me back?"

"A woman cannot do that, if a man chooses to run away from her—she may regret it, but she cannot say 'Do not go'—it would be thought unwomanly."

"And you would not risk that charge to save a man from despair? But you did call me with your eyes: if you had not, I should never have dared to come. That first evening, when I met you away from home, I saw it in your eyes, although you did not so intend. You were Venus that night, with the sea-foam around you, and very beautiful—as you are this morning, my darling, though you are pale."

As he looked into her face, perhaps the eyes spoke again, for his lips sought hers and kissed her passionately again and again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"'Tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue has sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself."

—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

TO Lucile Layton the time seemed to drag its slow length along almost imperceptibly, during these months. Day after day brought its monotonous round of petty cares and exhausting labors, and few of them were lighted up from without by any pleasant happenings. If she could have managed the domestic affairs entirely alone she would have found it easier, but her mother and her ways of doing things had to be considered all the time, and the young girl found it very hard to preserve even a decent degree of order and decorum in the family.

In the government of the children, the task would have been comparatively light if she could have had her own way with them; but the moment she had, through much difficulty, established her authority over them, the weak yielding and interference of the mother upset it again, and the losing battle went on from day to day. The boys were bright and good-tempered, but irrepressibly bent on excitement and change, and Lucile found it almost impossible to put the proper restraint upon them. She knew too well, for she had watched the outcome in too

many cases of the neighboring children, the fatal consequences of allowing such boys the freedom of the streets. The depths of vileness to which human nature descends is learned with fatal facility by the youngest lad who roams unrestrainedly through the poorer portion of any city, and the first steps of vice are taken before the careless parent is aware of the daily temptations which beset him.

The fiends who read vend literature, or who thrust it into childish hands, swarm in the courts and alleys; the saloons make small pretense of barring out the boys, unless some officer of the Citizens' League is by, for, unfortunately, the city's own officers cannot be trusted to protect the boys; vile women accost them on the corners, and, worst of all, depraved boys of their own age swarm everywhere, teaching swiftly the fatal lessons. It is a miracle that any boy escapes, and few, indeed, do escape, except those guarded by watchful parental love and the wisdom learned by contact with the world. The battle is unending, the vigilance eternal, the consecration perfect, that saves each individual boy from the awful contact of the streets. This was the heavy load that had been thrust upon Lucile Layton at eighteen—a load that almost crushed her with its sense of responsibility. The boys must go to school, and even there they learned enough of evil; but after they returned from school Lucile would have insisted that they remain at home, or at least within sight and call; but the mother, who could never realize their peril, but trusted to Providence to somehow bring them through all right, coaxed Lucile into permitting them more liberty, and she found herself quite powerless to prevent this dangerous indulgence.

In vain she reasoned with the mother; in vain she warned the boys of danger. She felt that day by day they were getting

farther away from her influence, and that but one result could be expected from the present conditions. In despair of doing anything for them herself, she at last wrote to an uncle, who lived in an inland town in Wisconsin, telling him of her trouble about the boys, and asking his advice. She knew him for a man of great good sense and firmness of principle, who had been successful in a small way, and whose home had been a favorite place with the boys for occasional visits. He answered the letter in person, appearing suddenly one day to the great delight of all, especially the boys, with whom Uncle Harry was a prime favorite. He invited the boys to go home with him for the summer, and, in private consultation with Lucile, informed her that he meant to keep them permanently, and that she might relieve her mind of all further responsibility concerning them.

"It will never do," he said, "to leave those wild boys for a little girl like you to manage. It would ruin the boys in six months' time in Chicago, and worry you to death besides. They need a man's authority, and they need an outlet for their energies. They will have horses to ride, and boats to row, and garden to tend, this summer, which will keep them happy and healthy. They can have all the clean fun they want out there, in the woods hunting and nutting, and by the creeks fishing and wading; and they'll never even think of the low fun they would be after here. All they want is transplanting."

The relief to Lucile was inconceivable, but the mother could hardly be prevailed upon to part with them, even for the summer, for it was not thought best to inform her at first of the full scope of the uncle's beneficent intentions. But the boys soon decided that point for themselves—go with Uncle Harry they would—and the mother, as usual, yielded to their clamor. Off they went, in the very highest of spirits, while the poor mother

wept in secret over her loss, and counted the days until she might hope for their return. This great load taken from her mind, Lucile found it a little easier to write her weekly quota of bright and lively gossip. What would have been easy for her when she was happy, had been inexpressibly hard during the sad time of her mourning and her anxious care. Much easier was it for her to pour out her heart in sad little songs, for which there was no sale, and which inflicted a pang on some loving hearts which read them.

There was one which Frank Dana carried around in his vest pocket, and which gave him a new pang every time he read it, which was so often that he soon knew it by heart. It was called

WEARINESS.

There are many weary in all the world;
If you listen low you will hear their cry,
Lauguishing long in life's burning marl,
Fainting and worn, they are ready to lie
Under the mosses with face to the sky.

There are many weary in all the world,
So weary some, they would deem it blest
When their sad eyes close in the quiet dusk,
Could they feel they had found an endless rest
From all that befalls in life's solemn quest.

But oh, ye weary in all the world,
I bid ye hail, and to be of cheer!
For the days fleet on, and, though dark and light,
Ever and ever it comes more near—
That sleep unbroken by cry or tear.

And for all the weary in all the world
The turf is growing that, when down prest,
Will cool the heat of the burning brow,
And lift the weight from the heart opprest;
All in His time, God giveth His rest.

It hurt Frank deeply that she would not allow him to comfort her with his love, and to help her to bear her new burdens.

All that friendship might do, or offer, he hastened to do, and that she gladly and thankfully received ; but further than this he did not dare to offer. He would have scorned to press himself upon her in her bitter need, when she had bidden him refrain from speaking when the need was a little less urgent. He respected her evident desire to keep him for a friend, with no embarrassing asking and denying between them. He felt her delicacy in so restraining him, and appreciated her care for his feelings; but he was bitterly rebellious at this decision, and gained no comfort as the days went on. Why should he be so thwarted by destiny—by that destiny which had been so uniformly kind to him before? He, who had all good things, felt it a wrong that even one should be denied him—this one, for which he would have given all else. It must be some fault of his own, he felt at times; he should have compelled her love during all this time of close companionship — he should have rendered himself indispensable to her happiness, to her being. But she was so young he had not dared to think of love until now—it was too soon.

He remembered a poem of hers, which he thought had some of her premature wisdom in it—a wisdom which must come of intuition, for by experience she could never have learned these secret things of life. It was called

THE HOUR AND THE GIFT.

We are beggars at life's feast;
  Ask a boon of angry Fate—
She at pleasure gives or holds,
  Gives it soon, or gives it late.

Oft she gives it ere our hearts
  Have learned to know its wealth or worth;
Love, which comes too soon, but tends
  To our drought and to our dearth.

Oft she holds it till its power
For our good is long o'er past,
Love, which comes too late, but adds
One new sorrow to the last.

Happy he who asks his boon
When a smiling face has Fate;
O, thrice happy he whose love
Comes not soon, and comes not late.

Meantime, seeing her was his only comfort, and he went as often as he thought expedient to cheer up her sad evenings. She is very glad to see him as he enters to-night, for she has been alone all day with her mother and feels wearied and discouraged.

"Oh, Frank! how good of you to come," as she runs up to him, impulsively, and grasps both hands, one of which is filled with flowers; "and to bring me some flowers, too," burying her face in them at once. "The sweet, dear things! I know Gertrude cut these, for she has remembered all my pets, as she always does—the dearest girl in the world. Why didn't she come, too? I feel as if I had never, never seen her, and never should again."

"Well, she did not come because I did not invite her, and she did not send the flowers for the reason that she did not know I was coming—you will have to take them as my choice, and not hers, this time. And, indeed, why shouldn't I know your taste as well as she—I know *you* a great deal better?"

"But not as well as you might. I'm a much more contemptible character than you've any idea of. When you find me out, you'll cut my acquaintance, and then where shall I be, I desire to know? You are the only tie that binds me to existence at present, I think. If you leave me I shall make my quietus with a bare bodkin, or a stay lace. I shall never go on wander-

"OH, FRANK! HOW GOOD OF YOU TO COME!"

ing through this vale of tears without a single man to scoff at, or to vent my vile humors on. Don't expect it of me. Stay by or I perish."

He had sat down on a low couch and she had come at once and seated herself beside him, looking laughingly in his face as she rattled on in her melancholy strain, which he always knew to be half earnest and half jest.

"Oh, you can rely upon me. I can't be shaken off by anything less than an earthquake. Even if we went down into the earth, I suppose by some fortuitous concourse of atoms, whatever that is, I should be gathered together and planted at your feet—to be trodden on again. But, however, I have yet to prove Shakespeare's aphorism true, that

> "The smallest worm will turn, being trodden on,
> And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood."

"I've been proving it false all this long time, but expect to prove it true yet, if you carry your persecutions and reviling too far."

"I revile you? Why I grovel at your feet, I'm so glad to see you, and so thankful for your continued existence, every time you come. What would a man have, I wonder?"

"Sweetness and light, that is what he demands, particularly sweetness."

"Oh, you all want to be flattered; you're a vain set, and you think we never half appreciate your merits. We do, and fearfully over-rate them usually. You're a pretty good fellow, Frank, but I don't suppose you're half as good as I picture you."

"Now, that is something like. Keep repeating that to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, till the last syllable of recorded time. I can stand that. Go on, pray."

"You're a little more absurd than I thought you. I've had a letter from the boys, don't you want to see it?"

"Indeed I do. I would not miss their letters for any sum. Have they tamed a boa-constrictor yet?"

"No, but they have performed some feats of that nature. Here it is."

DEAR OLD DRAGON:

Now that we've got away, you don't seem half so much of a dragon as you did, and we've concluded to ask you to forgive us for naming you so; but you know you were rather aggravating to boys, with your girl's ways—so 'fraid like—and all that. But you're the best of all the little dragons in the world, Sis, and the next best is Isabel Logan, as we both agree, and you may tell her so, if you will do it up scrumptiously. (Don't know how to spell that, but made a dash at it, and trust to luck.) Uncle Harry is the bulliest man alive, and is going to invite you all up here to spend the summer, if you'll come, and I know you will when you hear how thick the chipmunks are, and that there is a gopher in every hole, the whole country through. We drown them out, and catch them when they run, and have all our pockets full, most of the time.

A gopher is no luxury at all up here, but just as every-day as can be. But they are cute, all the same, but will bite if sat upon too hard. We've got two mud-turtles engraved with our names, and tied up with strings through their shells, so they can't escape to the creek again. The first one we got rather played it on us for green-horns, but we've got these fellows. Their names are Hannibal and Horatius, which sounds like your poetry, Sis—hanged if it don't. We ride the horses like a couple of circus actors, and get some tumbles, but Uncle Harry says it's seldom a boy actually breaks his neck, and anything less than that, you know, we can stand. Swim—why we can swim and give the ducks odds any time; and such fun—just tell the boys; they'll die of envy—every man.

We each milk two cows, and it's the jolliest go; and we work in the garden some every day, and are going to rake hay, and maybe pitch and stack, too, when haying begins. Uncle Harry says it's fun, and he knows.

Send us some books, because there's a Sunday in every single week, just as there was at home, and we can't do any of our best parts, and it's rather slow. But tell Isabel we get our lessons every time, and miss the stories awfully. If you can send "Jim, the Red-Headed Scout," I think we should like it; but most anything will do up here. We tried to rob a bee tree the other day, and had all the excitement we wanted for awhile, but can see now almost as well as ever; but you ought to have seen our faces all plastered with mud, and heard us sing, "How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour." We'll show you when you come up. We catch bull-heads and red-horses, every day, in the creek for breakfast, and Aunt Mary allows five apiece for us. But she's rather wasteful. You'd think so, if you saw the stacks

of victuals she cooks every day, and everything so awful good. You come and see, and tell mother to come soon, and that we have decided to live here and never come back. Chicago's too slow after this; and may you live long and prosper, is the wish of your loving and repentant BROTHERS.

Frank laughed heartily at the letter, exclaiming: "What a splendid thing for the boys to go there, for the next three or four years at least. Just how old are the boys?"

"Ten and twelve, and they ought to have good schools just now."

"Their school of out-door, practical life is a good one, even if they have no other. But in the country schools they will learn the rudiments quite as well as elsewhere. If they will, in the next three years, teach them to read well, write well, and spell respectably, it is more than they would do here, and it is the foundation of everything. If a boy is well taught that far he can get anything for himself that he desires, as he gets older. But if they don't learn those things while young, they won't get them. It's rather strange, but they almost never do."

"Oh, they will learn that and their arithmetic and geography very thoroughly up there, Uncle Harry says, and that he don't care if they never learn anything else in school. He thinks they can get everything they need by reading after that."

"They will do very well, certainly, but I think they are too bright to be satisfied with that, and if they want more they will have it, you know. They can't be hindered in this country if they really mean to rise. I'll take them and make bankers of them if they come out steady and ambitious."

"I will tell them that. It will give them a motive for work, and you know Isabel used to hold you up to them as an ideal, and they are rather modeling themselves on you."

"Isabel must have been very hard up for a model."

"She was. She said in looking about among all the men she knew she could hardly find one whom she could recommend her boys to imitate in all respects. You ought to feel very much flattered."

"I am, I assure you. But that is because I have no coarse vices such as she could recognize. If she knew what a poor fellow I am in many ways she would pity and not praise me."

"Oh, Frank! you shall not talk that way about my best friend. I'll not allow it."

"You'll find me out some day, and I want you to be prepared. But I'll send you some books for the boys, if you have not already sent the 'Red-Headed Scout,'" laughing gleefully as he spoke. "I've a whole library of boys' books saved up from my youth, which I have been waiting to bestow on some bright fellow like myself, who would appreciate them, and these chaps shall have them. But I'll only send a few now, just for Sundays, because I'd rather they would learn out-of-door things this summer; but when winter comes and the country is rather blue then I'll send the whole cargo up, and those boys will revel in them all winter. Christmas will be the time, won't it?"

"Oh, yes; how lovely to give them such a royal Christmas as that. I've always wanted to do it, but have been obliged to content myself with a very meagre offering. I shall enjoy the prospect until Christmas comes."

"There is nobody in the world who so appreciates a book as a country boy or girl who is fond of them. I've sent to some that I know every year for a long time, and I don't think any of my presents have been so well bestowed as those."

"How hungry the poor things must be for reading."

"Perfectly famished! You have no idea; with only one weekly paper in the house and three or four old books, and so

much time on their hands as they have. They might read any amount of books in a year if they only had them, while many of us who have the books can't get the time. There ought to be a redistribution of the good things of this world."

"I would go in for that, for then I might fare better."

"Or worse."

"Yes, indeed; how much worse—I might lose you. I don't think I'll go in for it, for I don't know of anything I'd exchange you for."

"Not even the military gentleman?" he said, lightly, though deeply moved at her words.

"Oh, Frank! what do I know about the military gentleman? I may not like him at all. I shall soon know now, though, for he says he shall surely be out here this coming summer. He is going to have a year's leave of absence, and travel. Won't that be nice?"

"Very nice, indeed, for him, and nicer still for me, if he'll only travel far enough. I would bestow my blessing on a trip to the fixed stars, if he desired it."

"Probably he will be ready to start after he has seen me. I know he will be fearfully disappointed; and, do you know, I'm so foolishly proud I can't bear to have him come here?"

"But you will not be here. I have just come over to tell you that mother has taken a cottage at Lake Geneva for the summer, and that you are to go to keep Gertrude company, while your mother goes to Wisconsin."

"Oh, that is too good to be true, I'm sure! I never expected to be so blest as that. A whole summer at Lake Geneva—when I expected to be held a prisoner here all that time! Your mother is certainly an angel, Frank."

"Yes; and her children?"

"A little lower than the angels—but fairly good for sinners."

"Then you'll come?"

"Would one refuse Paradise when offered, do you think?"

"Well, many people seem very anxious to put off going there as long as possible."

"They think it will keep."

"Yes; and they will take it when they can get nothing else—a kind of last resort. I don't blame them any; I feel that way myself—was never noted for my other-worldliness. This is a good enough world for me at present," and he moved a little nearer to Lucile, and gave one of his merry laughs.

"Where will you stay while we are all enjoying ourselves at the summer resorts, man of business?"

"Oh, I've resolved to abandon business for the summer. I've been in the harness a good while now, and need turning out on the turf as much as the horses do. I'm to go along as coachman. What could you do in the country without a driver? pray tell me that."

"Wouldn't John go?"

"Yes, John goes to do the drudgery. But you and Gertrude don't want to ride out with John every day, I'm sure. Besides, I want to drive, myself. I may set up a tally-ho coach yet, who knows?"

"Won't it be fun? How can we wait till the time comes?"

"It will not be long now. Isabel and Elinor are also to go for a part of the time. I am to have a tent for my head-quarters, and may invite the General when he comes, to share it. He is used to camp life and could endure it, probably. Then I expect to have Mr. Ray the most of the time and Herr Hardige at least a month. So you see we are in for good company."

"How very delightful it all is, but if 'those souls without a single thought' don't get their little matters into better shape by that time, what will be done with them?"

"Give them a chance; that is all they need, anyway. They can't get through a summer at Lake Geneva in senseless estrangement, I'm sure. I shall be a public benefactor, don't you think so?"

"I hardily know what to think about that. I for one should never dare to meddle with a life, for fear of doing irretrievable harm. In those things a touch may sometimes be fatal—a word precipitate a tragedy. I'm almost afraid to breathe when I know there is so much electricity in the air."

"But outsiders don't have any real effect. They can supply favorable conditions but the high contracting parties do the fatal work."

"An outside word sometimes tips an evenly balanced scale, I think. I would not dare to speak it in any case that I know."

"You are very conscientious. Do you think that marriage alone makes or mars a life?"

"It has the largest share of influence of any one thing, certainly. But some lives are happy and successful to a reasonable degree, although the marriage has not been perfect. But not one of our friends would rise above a mistake of that kind, I think. They are all too positive and intense. The world hangs on the issue, for all of them."

CHAPTER XIX.

"That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this world changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents."

A MONTH later found Mrs. Layton with her children, in the green Wisconsin woods. The farm to which she went was situated near one of those pleasant little villages which dot the southern portion of that State, and the beautiful Rock River flowed along its borders. The country about was somewhat broken, lightly wooded, and exceedingly picturesque. The little woman had been brought up in the country, but had been shut up within city streets for many a long day; not in the open and pleasant parts of the city, either, but in the poorer and narrower streets, where there is absolutely nothing pleasant on which to rest the eye, and where one can scarcely catch a glimpse of open sky without an effort. Here her life had been hard and cramped, and, although she was of a happy temperament and took the world lightly, she had suffered much during all these years, and that suffering had left its traces upon her.

For the first time since she had entered upon married life, she found herself free from the cares of a household—for these wives of poor men are housekeepers who never get a vacation, not even in the hottest summer. Through sweltering heat she had been used to struggle on, as through winter's cold—no change

coming to her with the revolving year—and she had contended with sickness, with narrow means, with rough, sometimes unkind, treatment, and with ceaseless worry about matters she was powerless to change. In feeble health many times herself, she had carried the children safely through much youthful ailment, had toiled for them almost literally day and night at times, and she had never complained of her lot. She seemed to look upon its hardships as inevitable, and endured them in silence. Now that a holiday had come, she did not know how to enjoy it at first; she was lost for want of her accustomed duties. But the boys did not leave her long in this state of mind, but soon had pleasure enough planned to occupy every moment of her waking hours, in healthy out-of-door ways. Uncle Harry had given her into their hands, and told them they must not let her get lonely up here, and they began a series of entertainments on a large scale at once. She must ride, and row, and walk, and picnic at all hours, and recline in their lawn tent when weary, or be swung in the hammock whenever she would submit to that amusement. The two little girls were her only care, and they were so much delighted with the country that they amused themselves all day, and needed no attention but to be fed and dressed, and washed at very frequent intervals.

The country scenes recalled her happy girlhood, and she grew younger every day in the serene atmosphere of this pleasant country home. Her brother was more and more delighted with her appearance from day to day, and fonder of the little girls with every passing hour, for his own had been a childless family—much to the grief of himself and his wife, who had already grown to feel like a mother to the two handsome boys, whom Providence had sent her, as she devoutly believed. How beautiful to see such a home, at last filled with the children it

so much needed, and how fortunate that the children who needed it had at last been placed within its precincts. All over the land are just such childless homes waiting for just such a blessing to fall upon them, and the children who should bless them perishing for lack of their protection and their love; but there seems to be no power to bring the two together, except in rare instances like this, when happy circumstance somehow brings it about.

To Uncle Harry, with both little girls upon his knee, the whole world seemed changed. He and his wife had been lonely in these later years, when they did not need to work as hard as formerly, and when the leisure they had earned seemed to hang somewhat heavily upon their hands. He had enjoyed the boys immensely, but the little girls were his crowning happiness, and he took thought for them every hour of the day. He could refuse them nothing and was soon a slave to their every whim, enjoying everything he did for them quite as much as they themselves enjoyed it. They were not long in settling that here they would remain. No talk of ever going back to the city was permitted in their presence. Violent weeping and open rebellion greeted every such allusion, and it was soon decided that for the present all would here remain.

One child alone in the country would be lonely, even as they are lonely in city or village, for every child needs mates to render its life pleasurable. But a family of children in a pleasant country home are among the happiest of the denizens of a work-day world, especially if the children are bright and original, as in this case, and not hampered by too much anxious care on the part of their elders. While life should last, these children would never forget all the pleasures of their country summers—all the sweet monotony of the long, bright days. Think you the week

"THE COUNTRY SCENES RECALLED HER HAPPY GIRLHOOD."

when they built the dam and put in the water-wheel will ever pass from their memories, or the time when they explored the Big Woods, and were allowed to camp out for two nights, and enjoy all the exciting adventures about which they were so fond of reading in books? The day when the new gun was tried, and when a nice bag of game was brought in—will its triumph be eclipsed by any of the good gifts which a fortunate life may bring? The day when they are all taken into town for the circus, which is the year's one dissipation for many farm-bred boys —will life furnish its equal, do you think? Hardly, as the average of life goes, I fancy. If only the toil were made a little lighter, the homes a little more attractive, a little more stimulus to the intellectual life given, boys would never forsake the country at the first call: it is their natural paradise. They ought never to be driven out of it by overwork, by unnecessary monotony, by absence of all aids to a studious and thoughtful life; nor will they be when the world grows a little wiser, and knows that the life of the country is the best life yet discovered, if rightly used, for all purposes of true education and real culture.

Happy he whose golden mile-stone is set in one of these pleasant rural neighborhoods, and who measures from it "every distance, through the gateways of the world around him." How often do those who have left its safe and sweet security, and gone forth to the harsh and cruel contests of life where the city's din is loudest and most discordant, look back with tearful eyes to the hearth of their ancestral homestead.

"We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations."

CHAPTER XX.

"Joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts."
—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

HOW impatiently the June days were awaited which should take Lucile, with her friends, to the sweet, fresh country, for which she had often longed, and longed in vain, during her brief life. Only a few short visits had she made to the real country, away from the city's suburbs. These visits had always seemed to her like glimpses of another and a better world. They were the earthly paradise of her dreams, and the prospect of making another of these visits, longer and more free from care and worry than any of the others had been, thrilled her with unspeakable delight. All that heart could ask seemed about to be offered her, and, with the glowing imagination of poetic youth, she pictured the coming time. With rapturous anticipation she "heard her days before her, and the music of her life."

And when, one perfect day about the middle of the month, she found herself really on the banks of the American Como, she felt that her cup of bliss was truly running over. The house which the Danas had rented for the season stood back a little from the lake, with the grounds sloping down to it, filled with magnificent old trees, just arrayed in their green velvet dresses, ready for the season when the world should come to look.

These trees were not too numerous, but let the sunshine through sufficiently to ensure a perfect sward, and the grass was one of the greatest of the summer's delights to Lucile, who felt an exhilaration in just setting her feet in its soft depths.

"We have walked miles," she said to Frank at evening, when he came from the train.

"Too much for the first day. Where have you been?"

"Not out of the grounds; but we have trodden over every inch of this turf scores of times. It is such a pleasure to walk on the grass. And oh, the roses!" Here she buried her face in the bunch she wore on her corsage, and laughed aloud in pure delight, the world was so lovely to her.

"I wanted to be here all the first day, so much," said Frank, regretfully; "but you haven't exhausted the new things yet. Geneva has more than grass and roses to enjoy."

"They were glory enough for one day."

"Not quite—you need a sunset on the lake to complete the thing. We'll go out just as soon as supper is over."

"Who cares for supper? We can eat roses."

"I prefer strawberries, and am ravenously hungry. Let us go and get it as soon as possible, and then for a row."

What a mirror of loveliness was the lake that night, and what a sunset glory filled the heavens. Off in the west were rolling masses of flaming clouds whose magnificence was indescribable in words; in the north these shaded off to opal and to gold, while in the east the reflection of all this splendor was a tender tint of rose-pink with violet edges. The reproduction of all this glory in the lake below seemed an extravagance of Nature, as if she was lavishing too much of grandeur on one of her great miracle-plays, and might be bankrupt to-morrow.

As this great blossoming of the heavens began to fade, the tints grew even more and more lovely and their number beyond computation. How were they shaded one into another—pearl and opal, amethyst, sea-green, turquoise and violet—and running through all the chord of gold! It was one of the spectacles of a lifetime, whose pomp shames all the petty magnificence of man.

"We shall never behold its like again," said Gertrude, when at last the fires had died out of the western skies, and the pale stars began to flock together in the measureless meadows of heaven.

"No," answered Frank, "there are never two sunsets alike, more than there are mornings or noondays; but to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow there will be one worth a king's ransom to see. We have great things before us this summer. What I anticipate most are the moonlit nights."

"But they cannot compare with the sunsets," said Lucile, dreamily, from out her trance of perfect rapture.

"Wait till you see the moonlight of Geneva before you judge."

"But sunrise comes first. I am coming out in the boat to-morrow morning to see the sun rise. May I?"

"Certainly not. You would drown yourself, and see no more sunsets forever. If you will call me I'll bring you out. I couldn't engage to wake myself."

"I should think not," laughed Gertrude, "and I am not any more certain that Lucile can wake herself at that unearthly hour, in this country air."

"Perhaps you will wake us both, you are always accommodating."

"Not I. This feast of color will last me very nicely till to-morrow night, and I wouldn't rise before seven o'clock in the morning to see the most resplendent sunrise."

"Well, we'll do it without your aid."

And with the best of resolutions to wake at dawn, they retired early, and slept until Gertrude, fully dressed, called them at half-past seven.

"Are you going back to the city to-day?" inquired Lucile of Frank after breakfast, when they were sitting on the porch overlooking the lake, lamenting the lost sunrise.

"Not I. I have come to stay, and I expect to be royally entertained. I have great expectations, like poor Pip. I feel with Browning, your pet, that—

> "'There may be heaven, there must be hell;
> Meantime, there is our earth here—well!'"

"Do you mean to take the whole of it?"

"A large slice—all that I have any use for—and I'm not very easily satisfied."

"Well, I felt as if I owned it all yesterday, and it was a delightful sensation. I disproved Lowell's statement that 'it's only heaven can be had for the asking,' for I had the world, with heaven thrown in."

"What can be left for to-day?"

"Oh, to-day we will have the coachman in addition."

"You couldn't have said the friend, conveniently? That would have sounded better to unpoetic ears."

"You proposed to come as coachman, and we accepted you in that capacity. Are you sick of the bargain, already?"

"No; and I will run away with one of the young ladies before night. I have long thought of it."

"Run away from Lake Geneva? I should as soon think of running away from Paradise!"

"Oh, they always run back, after a little, when they've had time to repent."

"The coachman usually repents first, doesn't he?"

"Invariably, I think. But I doubt if this one would be like the rest. He's an exceptional character."

With the letters that morning came one from Arthur Stanley, announcing his coming in a few days, and the greatest interest was taken in the news by all.

"Let us get as much fun out of life as possible before he gets here!" cried Frank. "We shall probably be turned into an Ethical Culture Society as soon as he arrives. Let us have a piping time to-day," and he sang gaily:

"At the wedding of Shon Maclean,
Twenty pipers together
Came in the wind and rain
Playing over the heather;
Backward their ribbons flew,
Bravely they strutted and blew,
Each clad in tartan new,
Bonnet and black cock feather;
And every piper was fu',
Twenty pipers together."

"No; we won't have all the fun before he gets here!" cried Gertrude, "for I'm sure he will add to the interest and even to the merriment, although he may not be able to sing about such interesting people as you do, Frank."

"Can he dance such a breakdown as this?" and he gave them a display of his skill, which created great consternation within, where his mother was sitting.

"We'll show you how he can dance, if you'll play the piper. Of course he'll outdo us all in dancing. The military students all dance divinely."

"But Sir Galahad is too serious-minded to dance well. I had better arrange for a course of parlor lectures on the Psychic Life of Micro-Organisms. Lucile wants to know all about proto-organisms, the motary and sensory organs, holophytic and saprophytic nutrition, and physiological function of the nucleus, I'm sure. It's a rare chance; this man alone can tell her, and I'm bound she shall not lose the glorious opportunity."

"Don't be absurd, Frank," answered Gertrude, "but let us really plan what we will do."

"The first evening we'll have a Browning Conversation, and I will recite:

> 'Hugues! I advise *mea poena*
> (Counterpoint glares like a Gorgon)
> Bid One, Two, Three, Four, Five, clear the arena!
> Say the word, straight I unstop the Full Organ,
> Blare out the *mode Palestrina*.'

You and Lucile can act the Red Cotton Night Cap Country, and the professor can show us how he 'carries the moon in his pocket.'"

"Oh, Frank, do be sensible. Lucile's quite disgusted with your antics, I'm sure."

"Are you, Lucile? Do you hate me worse than usual? Well, you know Browning said of you:

> 'But for loving, why, you would not, Sweet,
> Though we prayed you,
> Paid you, brayed you
> In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet.'"

Even Lucile laughed at the way this was hurled at her, though she was serious at the thought of Arthur Stanley's coming, and said:

"If you let up on Browning, and bring the horses around, we'll go off and forget the coming man, for the day at least,

though we must face him soon. I shall never be able to do it seriously—you make him so ridiculous."

"It will never do to treat him lightly. I'd rather tackle a problem in Euclid. But you can sit up to-night and learn a few pages of Browning."

Both girls here made a rush at him, and he ran for the stables, and soon brought the prancing horses around to the door.

At the end of the week Arthur arrived, and Frank brought him over from the village in his boat, inviting him to be their guest during his visit. Frank, although he feared him so much, liked him at once, and could not but own that he was a formidable rival. Tall, erect, with the firm step and proud bearing of the soldier, he came up the walk at Frank's side to the porch, where the ladies were sitting, with two pairs of eager eyes fixed upon him.

"I think I should not have recognized you from your picture," he said, as he greeted Lucile, and she answered:

"But you are very like your own, Mr. Stanley."

Then he greeted Gertrude, and sat down where he could look at Lucile, and began an easy and pleasant conversation which lasted until tea was served. After that was over they went down to the beach to embark for the nightly row, and Arthur took the opportunity to walk at Lucile's side and to say, "Seeing you has been one of my dreams this long time, Miss Layton."

"Our life is but a dream and a forgetting, according to Wordsworth—you have had the dream and you may soon be anxious for the forgetting," laughed Lucile, as he helped her into the boat, where she took her usual seat, opposite Frank, who had the oars, and left Arthur to entertain Gertrude at the other end of the boat. She felt shy and constrained in the

presence of this new-comer, and longed to put off making acquaintance with him as long as possible. She did not talk much even to Frank to-night; but Arthur and Gertrude kept up an animated conversation during the whole ride, she showing him all the favorite points of view, and he becoming quite as enthusiastic as she could wish, over the beauties of the place, and comparing everything with West Point and the Hudson.

"My travels have but just begun, Miss Dana, and I am delighted with everything. I have been about the East a little, know the coast of Maine, and the scenery up in that State—which is exceedingly fine—the White Mountains, and all the beauties of Massachusetts and New York—which are a great many, I assure you—but that is all I have seen of this great country."

"You have much in store for you, then, and I almost envy you your opportunity. Mine has not come yet, but when Frank can take a long vacation we mean to see what you have seen, and something of what you will see. I have only been to the Seashore, and some of the Eastern cities, and made a slight acquaintance with Niagara."

"To which I made my first visit three days ago."

Then the four planned out the travels they would undertake in the future, with all the enthusiasm of youth and with the large vision of that hopeful period. Frank had already been over a good deal of the ground they laid out, but was more anxious for the second trip than he had been for the first, and increased their enthusiasm by his own.

"But we shall see nothing finer than this wherever we go," said Arthur at last, looking out over the green translucent lake, bathed in the golden light of another magnificent sunset. "Do

you not think so, Miss Layton?" he asked of Lucile, who sat silent amid most of the talk.

"I am a poor judge. I have never seen anything else—except Chicago," she added with a laugh. "But this is beautiful enough," she went on, "I wouldn't care for anything else if I could always stay here, and I think I should get as much enjoyment out of it, as you who would wander the widest."

"If one has the seeing eye one can find beauty enough anywhere," granted Arthur.

"Except in Chicago," stipulated Lucile. "You can't find it there, for it is not there to find."

"What heresy!" cried Frank, "isn't Lake Michigan there—second only to the sea?"

"Oh, yes, of course we have the lake—with a railroad track along the sightliest portion."

"Haven't we parks?" cried Frank, in mock enthusiasm.

"In anticipation—yes. When you've had time to grow some trees—say fifty years from now—you may have parks. At present, the less said about the beauties of nature in your parks, the better."

Then she relapsed into silence again, leaving Gertrude to entertain the visitor until they reached the boat-landing once more. But all this time she was watching the stranger, and taking note of every passing word—was so intent upon studying him, indeed, that she could not even talk to him. How grateful she was to Gertrude, for making it all so easy and agreeable—this first interview, which might have been so formal and embarrassing. She felt very ill at ease with him, so far, that she knew, but she hoped to overcome this new feeling later, and she could but own there was much to admire in the new comer.

The same feeling remained with her after they went indoors; and when, at Gertrude's suggestion, they gathered around the piano for their usual evening music, Gertrude could not imagine what was the matter with Lucile—where all her usual charming abandon and gaiety had fled; and she hoped to get her engaged in singing, and thus break the spell which seemed to be upon her.

But even here she could not do herself justice, and was conscious of it; and was very grateful to Mr. Stanley, who saved the day by singing, in the finest manner, a number of the songs she was accustomed to sing. When they broke up for the evening, she lingered to run about with Frank, to fasten the doors and windows, saying, as she kept close to his side: "There, now, I can take a natural breath once more. Truly, Frank, I'm in mortal terror of that man. He paralyzes me."

Frank laughed gaily, and immediately christened him the "paralyzer," a word he did not soon drop, but held over her head for many a day.

"I trust your terrors will not abate," he said, as she went up the stairs at last. "Such awe-inspiring people are good for you. You've behaved very well to-night."

Frank retired in high spirits, which were dashed somewhat with gloom, next morning, when Arthur said to Lucile, as they went out on the lawn after breakfast: "Will you let me row you out a little way, Miss Layton? I see a little skiff down there which is just my ideal of a boat."

Lucile assented, and they were soon off, while Frank lingered disconsolately on the bank, wondering what he was to do with himself for the next few weeks if this sort of thing was to continue. He had really never had to face a rival until now, and his feelings were much more violent and bitter than he had ever

imagined they could be. While this man had been at a safe distance he could even jest at his possible winning of the coveted treasure; but now that he was face to face with that possibility, all seemed infinitely changed. He could but own the matter was going to be desperate for him, and he hardly knew how he could entertain this man as his guest, and give him the opportunity he needed to make his way with the woman he evidently meant to win. Frank had never felt before what it really would mean to him to lose this young girl, who had so liked and trusted him, and to whom he had become so passionately attached. He felt now that he could not endure to see her give to another the love she had denied him—that he should find life utterly worthless if, at the last, he should really lose her. He went to the stable and mounted his horse, and rode rapidly away to relieve, if possible, by motion, the heavy pain which had suddenly settled about his heart.

"Poor Frank," sighed Gertrude, who was not unmindful of all that went on in her brother's heart; "this is going to be very hard for him. I don't see how he is going to face it. Why couldn't Lucile have loved him, and this stranger have kept away?"

The rowers were out a long time, and Frank did not return until after they had done so; so Gertrude had almost the entire morning to meditate upon the old problem of why love does not inspire love in return, but often contrariwise? She did not solve it, nor have wiser heads than hers, though they have studied it in all ages.

The family dined early while in the country, and, when dinner was over, Gertrude proposed a long drive, to show Mr. Stanley the country, a proposition which seemed to please the company, and the horses were soon brought around. Frank was to drive,

and Lucile managed to say to him as they went down the steps: "I want to ride with the coachman." So he handed Gertrude to the back seat, and Mr. Stanley took his place beside her, as indicated by Frank's motion, while Lucile, saying "I am going to drive, you know," gaily took her place beside Frank. She felt quite natural and at ease thus seated, and began a lively comment on passing things and the gay badinage which made the charm of her ordinary conversation. For the first time Mr. Stanley saw the real Lucile, who seemed suddenly to have come out of her shell. She was taking her first lessons in driving these days, and was immensely interested, as was Frank in teaching her; and Mr. Stanley and Gertrude were soon left to amuse each other, while Lucile gave her whole mind to the horses, apparently, though in reality many serious thoughts were floating there, which were fast settling into convictions.

Gertrude, who was always beautiful, was more charming than usual to-day from increased animation given her by her responsibility as hostess, and from the sincere desire to please this new friend, whom she knew much better than he suspected. They soon became quite absorbed in each other, and the driving lesson went on unheeded, even the occasional sallies sent them from the front seat sometimes passing quite unnoticed.

Frank, who could not believe the world to be the same place it had seemed in the morning, was hilariously merry, and Lucile's laughter waked the echoes in many a lonely place. The country they were traversing was very beautiful, but it was not much noticed by these travelers, who found human nature a much more engrossing interest this day of June—this most perfect verse in the idyl of the year. All the long, long, golden afternoon the fleet horses sped over the enchanted roads, and the

refrain from the rhythmic beating of their hoofs might have been translated to a listening ear:

> "There's nothing half so sweet in life
> As love's young dream."

They paused upon one of the heights overlooking the lake to take in the glory of the sunset, and, rather silent, after that transcendent spectacle, they rode home in the gathering twilight, thrilled almost to intoxication by this new wine of youth and the elixir the gods prepare for mortals but once in life. After tea they were not too tired for music, and Lucile, who was herself again, astonished all by her splendid singing of the strains so haltingly rendered but the evening before. The passionate ballads, gallant and gay, she was fond of, seemed to take on new meaning to-night; and one, at least, of the company felt that he could fall at her feet and adore "not her, not her, but a voice." Then something more of "the delight of happy laughter, the delight of low replies," and the beautiful day was dead.

CHAPTER XXI.

"What shall be our sport then?
Let us sit and mock the good housewife
Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may
Henceforth be bestowed equally."

—*As You Like It.*

"ELINOR and Isabel will be here to-night," cried Gertrude, a few mornings after, as she read her letters.

"Now we will have music that will please you, Mr. Stanley, for Miss Lewis is the best unprofessional player in Chicago, it is said, by better judges than I."

"That will be delightful, indeed; but my greatest musical pleasure is in singing. Miss Lewis will not rival Miss Layton, I am sure."

"Wait tili Herr Hardige comes; he'll show you what music really means," said Frank.

"When will that be?" inquired Lucile. "I am getting really anxious to see the professor, although he pounds the piano so when I sing falsely, that it frightens me out of what little sense I ordinarily possess."

"I don't know when we shall capture him. I haven't got him down to a date yet. Mr. Ray will come next week, if he may bring a lot of books with him and study in the morning."

"Study in the country in June, indeed!" cried Lucile. "I never heard of anything so absurd. I won't even practice my songs, unless Herr Hardige makes me."

"He will; you needn't doubt that. He doesn't believe in vacations 'where the pupil loses, in a month of idleness, all she has gained by three months of application.' He told me so," said Frank.

"Concerning me?"

"Yes, concerning you. That's the reason I have insisted upon your practicing every evening. I would sacrifice the nerves of all the Danas, and of the stranger within the gates to boot, rather than have you fall back, as the professor predicted."

"But I have to learn to row and to drive this summer. One can't do everything, especially in vacation."

"No. You fail to do tennis very satisfactorily, as I have discovered of late. Shall we try these people once more? Gertrude looks particularly defiant this morning. We will beg them to bury us 'deeper, ever so little deeper,' than they did last night."

"We can do it," cried Arthur. "Come on, Macduff."

"I'm rather sorry these people are coming," he said to Gertrude, as they went toward the tennis ground. "Four are good company, but more are a crowd."

"But they are all delightful, Mr. Stanley," Gertrude answered, with heightened color. "You will particularly like the ladies, I am sure."

"And you the gentlemen?" he queried, laughingly, but looking straight into her eyes till they fell.

"Yes, indeed; they are both favorites of mine. Mr. Ray, you know, is our minister."

"And it is hence incumbent upon all the young parishioners to like him? Who would not be a minister?"

"Who, indeed?" cried Frank, overhearing; "fed upon manna —brought not by ravens, but by all the pretty girls in the con-

gregation. I've always envied Mr. Ray, who does not need to toil or spin, and yet can be clothed like Solomon in all his glory —as far as his feet go—by the young ladies who work slippers. I want to be a preacher, and with the preachers stand," he sang, loudly, as he seized his racquet and made an intimidating gesture at Lucile, who had both hands over her ears.

At evening the expected guests arrived, and were met at the depot by Frank and Lucile, who had driven over, in high spirits, and were laughing gaily as the travelers came forward.

"You seem in good spirits—are they contagious?" cried Elinor.

"They are indigenous to the soil," said Frank. "You'll be laughing involuntarily yourself by to-morrow morning."

"I hope so; I haven't been very hilarious of late, nor has Isabel here, I think; have you dear?"

"I'm never hilarious, that I know of; but usually cheerful. Not like Lucile, who either soars or sinks. You're soaring, nowadays, I think, by your looks, *mignonne*."

"Yes, indeed; I've been too happy for earth ever since I reached Geneva. It is the border-land of heaven—if not the celestial city itself."

"The General is here," said Frank, suggestively, unable to resist his propensity to tease, and Lucile blushed, and the girls drew their own conclusions.

"Indeed! Is he very nice?"

"Indeed he is," said Lucile, gravely. "I have never known a more agreeable person, I think;" and Frank added: "He is, indeed, very delightful to us all," but finishing, mentally, "I wish he was in Jericho, for all that."

When tea was over the newcomers were eager for a boat ride, and all started down to the beach with a rush. Lucile was first there, and took her seat in the end of the boat, shouting:

"Whosoever will, may come; but I'm here already."

Frank waited for Gertrude, who had gone back for a shawl, to come up, then said to Arthur:

"Will you row the boat, or the skiff?" knowing well, however, that Arthur preferred the skiff.

"I'll take the skiff, if Miss Dana will go with me," he answered; and Frank, with many smiles, handed the two girls in, and took the oars.

They were out late that evening, for the moonlight nights had now come, and no one was willing to go indoors. Occasionally the occupants of the larger boat hailed the smaller craft with the information that it was time to go in, but they always received the reply—"We don't intend to go in to-night," so rowed on themselves, the girls occasionally at the oars to relieve Frank, who made many jests about the easy time the General was having, and expended much mock sympathy on Lucile for not having taken possession of the smaller boat. "I shall know which boat to take after this," at last she replied, warningly; and he, too much afraid of the reprisals she might make, refrained from further teasing.

In the morning, when they were planning who should ride and who row, Mr. Stanley said to Lucile:

"I think rowing much the nicer, don't you?" with his most deferential air, and she answered, "Yes indeed!" and ran off with him to the beach. Then Frank thought she had her revenge, and rather ruefully ordered the horses around. He made a great effort to be gay and to entertain the ladies, but it was so plainly an effort that all were sorry for him; and after a little the girls began an absorbing conversation among themselves, and left him to silence, for which he had never before been so grateful. Frank certainly had the loyal support of all

these sympathizing girls, who were deeply interested in the outcome of his love, which seemed almost like their own personal affair—so much part had they had in it, from the beginning. The drive was not a very long one, and they were back on the piazza before Lucile and Mr. Stanley returned.

"Does Lucile really fancy Mr. Stanley?" inquired Isabel of Gertrude, as they sat apart.

"Yes, I think she does, because she seems so different in her treatment of him, from her free and easy ways with Frank. She seems shy and constrained with Mr. Stanley, but she is very earnest in his praise when she speaks about him."

"And he?"

"Oh, he cannot help admiring Lucile—though she does not appear to advantage when left with him. Then of course we know he was devoted to her, before coming."

"I was in hopes the personal attraction would not be as great as the epistolary one promised."

"And I, for poor Frank will be inconsolable, I think, if he loses Lucile. And I have always hoped that she would love him at last."

"What a dear, bright little thing she is, when she is happy."

"Yes, and she is rapturously happy here; it was a delight to see her, especially before Mr. Stanley came."

"We have been to visit the camp," Lucile explained in regard to their long absence, when they finally appeared. "Mr. Stanley wished to see what kind of soldiers the Western men make."

"And what did you think of our regiment, Mr. Stanley?" asked Isabel.

"They're a splendid lot of fellows, and their drill was very good."

"And we have found a place for a picnic when the other gentlemen come," cried Lucile, "the most adorable spot."

"What other gentlemen?" asked Isabel.

"Why, Mr. Ray and the professor, of course—didn't you know we expected them?"

"No, I was not aware of the fact," she answered nonchalantly, although her heart beat a little quicker for the information.

"Well, we are, and I wish they would come quickly. I need spiritual consolation badly myself, and there are some of the party who need the restraining influence of a clergyman."

Here she looked at Frank, who answered, "Well, Mr. Ray will be able to keep me straight—but where the party is who can restrain the unfortunate tendencies of some of the others—I don't know, I'm sure. Wish I did."

"I shall confess all my sins to him, the very first opportunity; I think he would make a perfectly divine Father Confessor, and I always wanted somebody who would at least promise me absolution. It would make one so very comfortable for a little while, even if one did catch it for the sins just the same, after awhile."

"You desire to be comfortable at all hazards, do you?" queried Mr. Stanley, who had not yet seen Lucile in one of her moods of perversity and exaggeration.

"Yes. I would drink the cup of sweet nepenthe, whatever that may be, if I could find it, and never worry over my sins and misdemeanors any more. Conscience is a very uncomfortable companion, I think."

"I should think you would feel just that way," put in Frank, savagely.

"Well, I do, and you needn't laugh at me either; I'm frightfully wicked, there's no doubt of that. I read in George Eliot

the other day something to the effect that if you wished a person to be dead, you had just the same as murdered him, and I've been feeling horribly remorseful ever since. To think of the people I've murdered."

"Oh, we knew you were pretty wicked, Lucile," cried Isabel, "but we did suppose you had stopped a little short of that."

"Well I haven't. That's what I wish to confess to Mr. Ray. I've known a lot of mean and ugly people that I wished dead, for the good of their friends. I always regarded the wish as a virtue before — but here comes along this preaching woman, and makes me so conscience-stricken, that I can't enjoy beating Mr. Stanley at tennis. I think it's a shame, and I'm in a hurry for the minister to come to console me."

"He'll give you a penance that will hurt. I'll suggest the appropriate one. He'll set you adrift 'alone, alone, all, all alone, alone on a wide, wide sea;' that will pay you for staying out so long this morning, and flirting so, generally." Frank lingered behind to say this close to her ear—as the others went on to the dining room, dinner having just been announced.

"I'd rather be set adrift alone, than with some people I have seen," she cried as she followed hastily, throwing back a saucy look at him as she ran.

"Well, he is coming to-night. I forgot to tell you before, but I got his letter an hour ago."

"Delightful! Aren't you glad, Elinor?"

"Very, indeed."

"Aren't you glad, Gertrude?"

"Enchanted."

"Aren't you glad, Isabel?"

"Yes. I am glad."

"I thought so," cried Lucile, with a laugh that was contagious and went around the table—though none knew clearly what they were laughing at.

When Mr. Ray came, she ran impulsively down the walk to meet him, saying: "I'm very glad to see you—and Elinor is delighted, and Gertrude enchanted, and Isabel simply glad—they said so, when I asked them."

"And I am to regulate my conduct according to the degree of interest expressed? Is that it?" he cried, laughing.

"Not at all, I assure you; these things always go by contraries."

"Then it is you who are enchanted. I feel immensly grateful, I am sure."

He received a warm greeting from all, and they undertook to explain to him how anxious Lucile was to see him. "Then I'll take her out to supper," he cried, as the servant announced that meal, and they walked gaily off together.

"How did you leave the sinners down below?" she inquired gravely, when a pause occurred in the animated conversation.

"About as usual, I believe, except that they miss their old friends who have gone before—to Geneva Lake."

"And we them; I particularly miss one of them—the professor—and wish he might soon join the old crowd in their new quarters."

"He's coming. I saw him just as I left. I think he'll be up to-morrow—he sent his love."

"To me?"

"Yes, and the rest; he didn't mention names, but we can draw our own conclusions. Of course he meant the collected company."

"No doubt. I think he is fond of people in general."

"Like the old preacher who gave the toast 'To all the people who on the earth do dwell.'"

"That is something like," cried Frank, "the exclusiveness of toasts in general is painful to a liberal mind."

"And the all-embracingness of some of the ministers is painful also," cried Lucile. "They have to be so impartial in their attentions to the whole membership, to keep peace in the institution, that they can't have individual friendships, or even loves, like common mortals. I wonder any of them ever marry. I shouldn't think they would dare make a selection, for fear of a Holy War."

"But they do, usually; marry early and often, most of them," said Frank.

"Yes, a man will take that privilege," said Mr. Ray, "peaceably if he can, forcibly if he must."

"Don't you dread the great contention, Mr. Ray?" Lucile kept on. "Have you filed your Declaration of Independence yet, or is the great transaction yet in the dim future?"

"I haven't begun to worry about it yet, Miss Layton. How is it with poets? Are they entirely untrammelled in their choice, or do they have to take some account of the public in these matters, too?"

"Oh, nothing but folly is expected of them; and they generally justify the expectation. For my part I wish people could marry on probation, as they join the church. The fixed nature of the bargain at present, appals me. If I like a person to-day, how am I to know that I shall like him five years from now? Judging by what I know of myself, I shall be very likely to detest him."

"Well, you can assassinate him," said Isabel gravely, "you have owned up to-day to your homicidal propensities."

"True, I could, but it would be a great deal of trouble. There ought to be an easier and more lady-like way of escape."

"There is the Divorce Court," suggested Mr. Ray. "It was made for people of your way of thinking, and there seems to be a great many of them. Marrying on probation seems to be an accomplished fact."

"But it is disgraceful."

"Scarcely, is it?"

"Only slightly disagreeable," said Mr. Stanley, "even that will probably be done away with soon, at the rate we are going now. Then all will be lovely for the fickle-minded."

"Then will come the world's great bridals chaste and calm," said Lucile, perversely. "Then will come the statelier Eden back to men, as Tennyson predicts," and she smiled defiantly across the table at Gertrude, whose look expressed a kind of horrified surprise. "See Gertrude," she cried, "her face shows all the horror she cannot utter. She considers me a candidate for the madhouse."

"No, indeed, Lucile, I know you too well. It is only strangers who will think you ever mean what you say."

"Thank you, dear. I will immediately relapse into propriety, which is my normal state as you all know."

"These lapses of Lucile's into the savage state are probably a reminiscence of a previous existence," said Frank, "I think at some period she was either a lioness or something else equally wicked. After another incarnation or two, she will be quite toned down to the common level."

"And as uninteresting as the common level usually is, perhaps," she retorted, "but I pray for a better fate than that."

"I think I must have been evolved from an oyster," said Gertrude, "if Lucile descended from a lioness; I have about

as little character now, as at the beginning, but it is very comfortable not to have the grand tragic nature, if it is very uninteresting."

"And everybody is fond of oysters," said Lucile, "while few dare to meddle with—"

"Poets," said Mr. Ray as they all arose from the table. "But I'm not afraid," he added, smiling at her as he offered his arm, "at least not when there are others around."

"But don't get out on the lake with her alone," said Frank, warningly. "If you do, you will not be likely to get back—at any rate not in the limits of an average lifetime."

"I'll be careful. Is there anyone here with whom it is safe to go out, for I am just longing to pull that little boat I see down there at this present minute?"

"Yes; there's Isabel, or even Elinor. I think they might let you get back somewhere about midnight."

"Will you, Miss Logan?" said Mr. Ray, gaily.

"I'll make no promises. The moonlight does away with all ideas of time."

"Well, I'll trust you this once," and he led the way down the walk.

"Bury the hatchet and come out with me," said Frank to Lucile then, very earnestly, and she answered:

"I should like that, too. Where is Elinor? she wouldn't miss the evening ride for anything—would you, Elinor?" she cried to her across the porch.

"Certainly not. I am always to be counted upon for that."

"Will you come, too, Stanley?" Frank said, as they started off, and Arthur answered:

"No. I think I will keep Miss Dana company, if she will let me."

"We must have a boat large enough for six when the professor comes," said Gertrude, as Arthur came and sat beside her.

"It is not necessary always to go in crowds," he said, laughing. "I think it is very pleasant to be left behind once in awhile. Don't you think, in this company, you can almost count on at least two couples who will enjoy a tete-a-tete?"

"Very likely. People show their real natures more in such quiet talks, I think. It is hard to get any serious conversation in a mixed company. I like nonsense and jesting, but I like sometimes to be in earnest. Do not you, Mr. Stanley?"

"Yes, indeed; that is my nature. All this *persiflage* is pleasant in its place, but I like to speak sometimes of things that lie a little deeper. I am rather a heavy person, as you have no doubt discovered, Miss Dana. I have no wit, and no great sense of humor, either. I am sorry for it. The world goes a good deal easier to those who have, I judge."

The conversation that followed was long and earnest, and much enjoyed by both. One, at least, of the tete-a-tetes was a success upon this brilliant moonlight night, upon the banks of this shimmering lake. And when Gertrude finally stole away from the re-assembled company, and sought her own room, she sat long in the seat by the window, gazing out over the glowing waters, and recalling each word that had been said; each tone of a voice, unconsciously to herself, grew dear—each look from eyes that were dark and eloquent; and new dreams and thoughts and fancies took full possession of a young heart that had never known such witchery before. But a kind of trembling fear was in her new-found joy—that element of uncertainty which is at once the charm and the hidden thorn of love.

At first she had taken it for granted that Arthur must love Lucile—did love her already—and tried to rejoice in the good

fortune of her friend, who had won so peerless a man; for Gertrude had regarded him as that even before she had seen him; but now she had begun to question, and to ask herself if this was really true, and even to doubt it, and to cherish the doubt. And so her dreams were sweet this night of June.

CHAPTER XXII.

" Love sought is good, but given
Unsought is better."
—*Twelfth Night.*

ALL were gathered on the lawn next morning and talking in high spirits when a carriage came up the driveway, and the group recognized with undisguised surprise Miss Imogene Willis.

"Now by my life this fight grows wondrous hot," quoted Lucile, aside to Frank, and he answered

" When a world of men
Could not prevail with all their oratory,
Yet hath a woman's kindness overruled."

"A plague upon her kindness—I wish she was in the farthest depths of Mesopotamia, wherever that may be."

"It is a rebuke to this whole body of conspirators, perhaps administered by Providence—who knows?"

"Man proposes, but woman disposes, in this case at least. I can't be civil and I won't go forward. The rest of you may do the honors, but hyprocrisy was never my great part."

"No, laying deep plots and getting beaten at your own game is more in your line," laughed Frank, as he went down to the carriage.

"Well, Miss Willis, this is a surprise indeed. When did you arrive?"

"Oh, we came up yesterday—mamma and I, and have already come to the end of our devices for killing time, so thought of you people this morning, and decided to beg you all to come and dine with us at the hotel. I assure you it will be a genuine act of human kindness; there isn't a soul here we know—it's so early in the season, you see—and after riding around the lake once, which we did yesterday, we find nothing to do."

"You'll probably not stay long, then, if you find it a bore. Now we are all charmed."

"Yes, with your party, no wonder. Who wouldn't be charmed? But in single blessedness—"

"Oh, of course. I don't think I would seek the wilderness alone. Even Byron wanted one fair spirit for his minister."

"You're getting poetic. Miss Layton is here, isn't she?"

"Yes, she is skulking somewhere around the corner, I think. I believe her bangs don't curl, or something, and she thinks she can't see city callers."

"Well, give her my compliments and ask her mercifully to come to dinner. The dinner, by the way, is atrocious."

"Never mind, it won't take long to eat it, and we can get on the steamer, and spend the evening on the lake as usual, if that suits you."

"Oh, yes, that will be delightful. When you've company it's so different. I think mamma and I were rather bored going around alone. Our only interest was in trying to make out where you people were."

"Was it at evening?"

"Yes. After supper."

"Well, Mr. Ray was out with Miss Logan, I think, in the skiff—out an awfully long time, too, by the way—and I had the others out in the large boat. Didn't you see such a flotilla as that?"

said Frank, maliciously, and she answered, rather at random, "No—yes—I did see some boats but could not make out who were in them."

The rest of the group had been chatting during this colloquy, but every one heard this bit of "volunteered vitriol" as Elinor called it to Gertrude, and none felt much grieved, apparently, for all smiled—even Mr. Ray, who seemed inclined to break into a laugh at Frank's ferocity, being much amused at the dialogue.

"Well then, I'll expect you at six. Can I take any of you anywhere?"

"I believe we're all engaged for the morning," Frank answered rather hurriedly, and with much waving of hands and merry good-byes she rode away.

"Why didn't you come out, Lucile?" said Gertrude, as they sauntered toward her.

"I was too busy with Diana: great is Diana of the Danas," she answered, still caressing the great dog. "Besides, I didn't look well enough to appear before the beauty of the season."

"You look as well as usual, for all I see."

"Well, I want to look better than usual, when I place myself in contrast with professionals."

"Why have you never thought to set up as a professional beauty yourself, Lucile? It don't require much capital, I'm told," said Elinor.

"If I had Gertrude's stock in trade I would; but my eyes would destroy me. I have never yet heard of a professional beauty with spectacles. I think it's a shame—I'm so adapted to the character otherwise."

"How so?"

"Oh, in my meager endowment of brains, and my inordinate desire for admiration."

"Is it great? You've never owned that before, I think," said Mr. Ray.

"Well, I don't need to proclaim it from the housetops. It speaks for itself, I think; and it is truly my besetting sin. I often pity people who are uglier than I am. I can get a little attention once in awhile, when there are not too many rival attractions, but there are some unfortunates who are so hideous they can't get admiration from a boot-black. I pity people who are hideous through no fault of their own."

"Why, you grow quite pathetic," said Isabel. "One would think you had had some personal experience, you feel it so."

"Well, can't you appreciate the feeling? And I don't think you've had personal experience, though you're not a professional beauty more than I," she said, laughingly.

"Yes, I can. It is very pitiable, I think, to be really ugly, with no mitigating circumstances."

"To be dreadfully freckled, for instance," said Elinor, putting both hands over her nose, where the extreme whiteness of her skin was marked by a few tiny specks.

"Or hair that is aggressively red," said Lucile.

"Or a nose like a peak of the Andes."

"Did you mean beak?" interrupted Frank.

"Or one of those cavernous mouths one sometimes sees," said Mr. Ray.

"Or, worst of all, fangs for teeth," said Arthur, and he added: "Most certainly it is a great misfortune to be doomed to carry such marks as those for life. If one is only regular and wholesome, it matters not how rugged and plain he may be."

"I'm really fond of homely men," said Lucile; "but I wish all women could look well. Not like some we have seen lately —'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null'—but comfortably handsome: like Elinor, for instance."

"The conversation is getting too personal," said that young lady, walking off, followed by Isabel, who much desired to escape the company.

"How very stupid," said Elinor, "to have to go there to dinner."

"Stupid, indeed! I think it will be simply torture. I wonder if I can't drop out—Lucile and I. She don't want to go."

"I don't see how, very well."

"Nor I. I suppose it will be best to go," and she walked off by herself and sat on a ledge of rock, gazing out upon the dazzling surface of the lake.

After awhile Mr. Ray, book in hand, strolled that way, and cried out: "I am looking for a quiet nook to read in; isn't that a good place?"

"It is quiet at present. What it may become if you take possession I won't predict."

"I've got to study up a sermon. Will you help me if I come?"

"I'm afraid I should be poor help at that."

"I am sure you will be excellent. You've given me several good sermons already," and he moved up beside her, and spread his umbrella over her head.

"Can't I get a sermon out of 'Adam Bede'?"

"There are several sermons in it, I think, well adapted to the times."

"Well, we'll extract one of them."

And it took the whole forenoon to do it, much to the pleasure of the remainder of the company, who were playing tennis.

"But I'm afraid he's a terrible flirt," said Lucile to Frank, when they finally started out to bring the wanderers in to lunch.

"He'd better not flirt with Isabel when I am around. I think I shall soon ask him his intentions."

"He ought to be told pretty soon that he cannot serve God and Mammon. I think I'm the one to inform him. Wait till after to-night's developments."

"Don't you want any lunch?" inquired Lucile of Mr. Ray, when they had found them.

"Go away. We're making my Sunday sermon, and can't be interfered with just now."

"It must be an awfully long one. You've been a good while about it."

"Only got to seventhly."

"Well, that's far enough for hot weather. Better come and have some salad and strawberries. We all propose to make a hearty lunch, as the dinner is sure to be bad. Miss Willis said so, and she is a judge of a dinner if not of a sermon."

"You know how to appeal to our weaknesses; and you've scattered all our ideas anyway, so we'll come," and they climbed down from the cliff.

As they walked up, they discovered Herr Hardige on the lawn, who had come one train earlier than was expected. He was warmly received, Lucile remarking, "It must be very pleasant to be greeted with such loud and long-continued applause wherever you go, professor. I should enjoy such enthusiasm myself, if I could produce it."

"You may achieve it yet, Miss Lucile. It has but just come to me, and has all the charms of novelty. But these friends have always been kind. It's their natural way of living, I think."

"It is a beautiful compliment you pay them," said Mr. Stanley, "but, I think, well deserved."

"If these fine speeches include me," cried Lucile, "I return thanks, and beg for more of the same sort. I like bon-bons."

"And have an insatiable craving for admiration," said Isabel. "Your own admission, you know."

"If admiration makes her happy, she ought to fare well in this company," said Herr Hardige. "I think we are all worshippers at her shrine."

"Pray go on:

'Give me agates for my meat,
Give me cantharides to eat.'

Emerson called for them, and I'm sure I dote on them, though I don't know what they are."

"You'll probably get them for dinner, but I can't promise as to the lunch," said Frank, leading the way into the house.

The afternoon was spent chiefly on the lawn, where they broke up into groups to suit themselves, the gentlemen having books and papers and the girls fancy work.

"We're saving ourselves for the effort of our lives, you know," Lucile explained to the professor. "We're going out to dinner with Miss Willis, and we shall need all our energies fresh and unexhausted. You can talk to me a little: there will be no tension of the intellect in that, but you'd better avoid Elinor, and the other intellectual ones, and hoard your resources."

"But it sometimes requires more mental effort to speak to people of little minds than to persons with great ones."

"Well, seek the most congenial soul. I'm going to sleep in the hammock."

At six o'clock they rode gaily away, and were received by Miss Willis with great enthusiasm. "Positively the longest day

of my life," she said. "I've been so anxious to have you arrive."

"And we have brought one more than you expected. Allow me to introduce Herr Hardige," said Frank, and she smiled one of her sweetest smiles on the newcomer.

She appropriated Mr. Ray to herself quite as a matter-of-course, as all noted, and left the others to come out as they chose. Whereupon Mr. Stanley offered his arms to Lucile and Gertrude, Frank escorted Mrs. Willis and Isabel, and left Herr Hardige to take Elinor out, as he knew would be agreeable. In the first pause in the conversation, Lucile, who could always be depended upon to tease, inquired of Mr. Ray, "What was the subject of the sermon you and Isabel were composing this morning?"

"We haven't named it yet," he answered, not disconcerted in the least, as she expected, "We only marked out the outlines anyway; it will take another whole morning to finish the details."

"I wish you would choose me as an assistant—I could write a most astonishing sermon. I've always wanted to try."

"Well, I must get all my summer sermons out of some of you—perhaps I'll try you next. You may be thinking up a good theme."

"I saw a good one the other day," remarked Elinor, "Blessed be Drudgery."

"I don't know that I am quite capable of writing about that. I have never had very hard experiences of the world—though I'm quite a worker in my way—and whether I could really find the blessing in genuine drudgery I can't say."

"Before one tries to write of the blessing of drudgery," remarked Herr Hardige, "he ought to lead the life of a drudge for

a few years. Let him rise at five o'clock in the morning, saw wood and do other family chores until six, eat a poor and unpalatable breakfast, walk two miles to his job, put in ten hours work, walk back, do more chores, eat another poor meal, and drop into his hard bed, so spent that he hasn't strength or courage or heart to notice his children, or caress his wife. Let him keep this up day after day, month after month, and year after year, with only Sundays for a rest, and with the ministers wondering why he doesn't spend that in church, and then he may be prepared to write up the blessings of drudgery, otherwise I don't think he ought to try."

"Or take the lot of a laborer's wife," said Isabel; "if you want to know something of real drudgery, you can find it there. She, too, rises early to prepare the breakfast, washes and dresses the children, puts up the lunches, mends some garment hurriedly before they can start for school, probably with a baby in her arms, washes, scrubs and bakes, tends baby and sews, until night arrives, gets the supper, and sits up to mend or make clothes after the rest have gone to bed. I never could have believed how they work, if I had not seen it for myself, where I have been to visit my scholars."

"Take sewing women and clerks," said Lucile, "and it is not much better. The labor may not be quite so heavy, but the hours are just as intolerably long."

"An eloquent chapter might be written upon the drudgery of public school teachers also, I think," said Elinor. "Their faces show after a few years how exhausting their work is."

"This all makes me feel very wicked that I am such an idler," said Gertrude. "We are not doing our share, or these others would not to have to toil so much, it seems to me."

"But there are too many laborers already," said Lucile,

"that is one of the great troubles—there is not work enough to go around."

"Rather that it is not evenly distributed, I think," said Mr. Stanley. "We are coming soon, I fear, to the time Lowell speaks of, when there is to be

> 'One-death grapple in the darkness
> Twixt old systems and the Word.'"

"I wonder if any of us are quite willing to obey the teachings of the Word in this particular?" said Frank. "Some of us are quite ready for what we call deeds of mercy, but are any of us ready for simple justice between man and man?"

"We have hardly learned the meaning of the word yet," answered Herr Hardige. "To quote Lowell still further,

> 'New occasions teach new duties;
> Time makes ancient good uncouth.'

All our old ideas upon this subject have to be remodelled in the light of the new day."

"If we would but regard every man as our own brother it would all be simple," said Isabel, "but that is the hardest of all things to do."

"We keep preaching human brotherhood, all the time," said Mr. Ray, "but it doesn't seem to strike in very deeply. Sometimes I am convinced of the utter futility of all preaching. Then I run off to get a rest and my very people try to get me at it again, even at the dinner table."

"That is because we all like to hear you preach so well," said Miss Willis, "that we would even take a small sermon with our dinner."

"Well, you won't get it out of me to-night. I've made one to-day with Miss Logan's help, and now I'm going in for non-

sense. I don't believe in the blessings of drudgery, anyway. If any of the rest of you do, you may have them."

"I suppose the minister who preached about it would try to make out that it produced saintly characters—that the discipline of suffering and sacrifice is very beautiful to the soul—and all that sort of thing, but I don't believe it," said Lucile. "I think it is more apt to harden and deform—these drudges don't grow wings to any great extent."

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Stanley, "but there are certainly very notable exceptions."

"Doubtless, but as a rule I think happy people are more solicitous for the happiness of others, than those who are miserable themselves."

"There is a selfishness of misery, as well as of happiness, no doubt, and a hardening of the sensibilities by familiarity with suffering, we all know."

Dinner over they all made their way down to the steamer, which was ready for its evening trip, and was soon dancing over the waves. Isabel, who had taken Frank's arm and led the way down to the landing, seated herself with him in the stern of the boat, and left the others to their own devices, only calling to Lucile, as she fluttered by, "Here's a very nice place—won't you come?"

Lucile accepted the invitation, and the rest went on. But after making a circuit of the boat, all came back except Herr Hardige and Elinor, and seated themselves near.

"We couldn't find a better place," said Mr. Ray, "so we've returned. Tete-a-tetes even of three are not allowed. Make room there," he said to Frank, and placed a chair for himself next to Isabel and one for Miss Willis on the other side.

"I shall have to give him that ultimatum," whispered Lucile to Frank.

"Yes, tell him 'the choice goes on forever twixt the darkness and the light'—that's one of his favorite quotations."

Gertrude and Mr. Stanley sat a little apart from the others, and he was talking very eloquently of the Hudson, and the delights of boating at West Point, until she became almost as enthusiastic as he.

"Oh, I should like to see it all, so much," she sighs at last, with real longing in her voice.

"And I want so much to show it to you," he answered softly, "there is no one I should so like to take to all my favorite places there, as you." And his eyes said even more than his voice. Gertrude's eyes fell, and the color rose to her cheeks as she replied, "Perhaps Frank will bring me down some summer."

"Make him come there on his bridal trip, and bring you along. I judge there will be a bridal trip one day," he added inquiringly.

"Indeed I do not know—do you mean Lucile?" she faltered, with her heart beating very violently.

"It certainly has that appearance to me. Are you quite blind, or have you known it all along?"

"I have known that Frank was fond of her, for a long time, of course. But I have been afraid that Lucile did not care for him in the same way. Of course, she likes him, very much—everybody likes Frank, you know."

"She is quite as fond of him as he of her, or I am very greatly mistaken; and what a very perfect match it will be."

"Yes, I think they would be very happy together," she faltered, the tumult of feeling within almost precluding utterance.

"She is a very beautiful girl," he went on, "with a wonderfully rich nature, and great gifts. I have admired her exceedingly for a long time, at a distance, and I admire her quite as much now. I can congratulate your brother very heartily on his choice, and Miss Lucile fully as much on hers."

"Oh, I do hope you are right. It is the greatest wish of my heart, to see them happy together. But I have never dared hope it would be so."

"You need have no fears, I am sure; and will you come with them on the bridal tour?"

"I shall be enchanted to do so, if they will have me."

"Perhaps they will invite me to the wedding, and I can be of the bridal party myself."

"Perhaps; but I think we are rather settling details for them before they have arranged the principal event," she laughed.

"There is one thing we can do," he answered, boldly; "that is, to take the principal parts ourselves in this bridal trip, and have them as the accessories."

She blushed hotly, and made no reply.

"Do you not think that would be the best way, dear?" he whispered, quite close to her now, and she answered: "Perhaps," and looked far away over the waters, not daring to meet his eyes.

"What a fortunate visit this was for me," he said. "I knew I had met my fate the moment I saw you almost, but I did not dare to hope you could be heart-whole, you who must have had so many lovers."

"You are quite mistaken in that. I have never had a lover before," she stammered, still unable to meet his eyes.

"The gentlemen of your acquaintance must be remarkable for poor taste, then," he said; "but I am very, very glad of it.

I should not like to take the fragments of a young girl's heart."

"And I was so sure you would love Lucile."

"I thought myself that I should when I came—I admired her so, and was so interested in her character; but she had no personal attraction for me after I saw you—none whatever—even if I had not been so sure she was in love with your brother."

"But you must not think this is all such a sudden matter with me," she said, naively, thinking it almost indelicate to love him so soon, "for I have known you ever since Lucile began to correspond with you, and felt perfectly well acquainted when you came. I used to enjoy your letters quite as much as Lucile."

"I did not mean to tell you quite so soon, for fear you would think me too rash and premature; but the sight of all these other pairing couples rather hastened the crisis. How glad I am now that I did not wait longer."

"But what will Lucile think of me, I wonder? Supposing she does love you after all, she will think me a very treacherous friend."

"Shall we go and tell her at once, and have it over?"

"Oh, pray do not tell anybody quite yet! I could not bear to have them all know it, I am sure. I will only tell mamma for the present."

Just then Elinor and Herr Hardige came walking back toward the company, looking so radiant that no one felt like chiding them for their exclusiveness. Mr. Stanley and Gertrude arose, too, and all fell into a promenade on the almost empty deck.

Isabel joined herself to Frank and Lucile, spite of Mr. Ray's remonstrance, and that gentleman was left to the tete-a-tete with Miss Willis, which one of them, at least, had longed for.

Imogene was very beautiful to-night, and she clung to his arm with such confiding trust, and had such evident pleasure in doing so, that a man would have been more than mortal not to have been pleased and touched.

It was Mr. Ray's nature to be tender, and all his attentions to ladies had something lover-like about them; the spell of the moonlight was now upon him, too, and the contagious atmosphere of so many other lovers; and those who walked behind him thought there was something almost caressing in his air to his companion. One, at least, thought so, and prayed for darkness and solitude, and the sweet oblivion of sleep. The remainder of the trip seemed endless to her, and when at last they reached home, she ran directly to her room, locked the door, and refused to admit the others when they came trooping up. "I'm tired out. We'll talk it all over in the morning," she called out, and, comprehending something of the situation, they passed on, deep pity in each heart, and loving prayers.

"I really cannot endure it," exclaimed Lucile, passionately, to Elinor. "Mr. Ray shall not marry that clay image. I'll just tell him he can't, and shan't."

"'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls, my dear, 'and matter enough to save one's own,'" replied that wiser heart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Dream of success and happy victory."
—*Richard III.*

THE conflict between love, and duty to her father, was still raging in the breast of Elinor Lewis. Her father had received the story of her "infatuation," as he termed it, with anger and scorn, and with many reproaches for her betrayal of the confidence he had placed in her. Like American parents in general, he had left the selection of associates almost entirely to the child herself, with that careless confidence in the immature judgment of youth, which seems to prevail among otherwise sensible parents. And, like other parents, when an unwelcome or unfortunate selection is made, under these circumstances, he blamed the child rather than his own folly or indifference. Elinor's mother had been dead some years, and for a girl left so entirely to her own guidance, in matters educational and social, she had displayed surprisingly good sense and sound judgment. Her father had learned to have the utmost confidence in her, and asked few questions as to her social engagements and associates. And Elinor had tried to justify this confidence, by the utmost circumspection.

Her native pride and dignity had helped her in this. Indeed, until she became interested in Herr Hardige, she had not felt the slightest difficulty in managing these things to please both herself and her father. Since that time, however, her task had

been hard. She had failed to please herself for the first time—and also for the first time failed to please her father. This had given her much unhappiness for some months now, though the spell of her first love was so strong upon her, that a kind of wild and delirious joy lay beneath all the pain and worry of the situation. Of one thing she was convinced, and had succeeded in convincing her father, and that was that come what would, she should never marry any man but Herr Hardige. She would remain with her father, always, if he so desired, but she would cherish her love in her own heart, constant and unashamed. She would not promise to give up all intercourse with her lover, nor to keep her preference a secret from the world. She had too much native independence and daring in her nature to do either. But Herr Hardige would not visit at a house where he was unwelcome, and she had seen him but a few times, and that by chance, during all the time since the memorable party at the home of Mrs. Lawrence. Her father had informed her of late that she might marry just as she desired—she had a fortune of her own from her mother, and was not dependent upon him—but that she need never expect him to give his approval to such a marriage. Her heart was very sore with the conflict between filial affection and duty, and the enthusiastic love of a warm nature. Sometimes she felt it her duty to regard the wishes of her father, even to the extent of sacrificing her own happiness: at others she felt it her duty to comfort the heart which had lavished such devotion upon her, and whose only hope and salvation she seemed to be. She was really at the "parting of the ways," but knew not into which path duty beckoned her.

In this state of mind she had arrived at the Dana cottage. She had no knowledge of the expected coming of Herr

Hardige—though the possibility of meeting him here had not been entirely absent from her mind. The pleasure the meeting had afforded her could hardly be described in words. But that pang which is in all enjoyment was not wanting—the blight of a father's disapproval could hardly be neutralized by that joy which is at the heart of every pain born of love. The morning after the dinner party, the girls were all gathered in Gertrude's boudoir, when they heard the sound of the piano below, and knew that Herr Hardige was pouring out his very soul, in solitude. They set the door wide-open and listened. Indeed, Lucile stole down upon the stairs, and sat until he had finished the improvisation.

"What puts such rapture into the keys this morning, *mabelle*," she said to Elinor, when she had come back, "did you give any rash promises last night, in the moonlight?"

"No; I gave them some time ago, and without the excuse of being overcome by the spell of the night."

"Did you, indeed, dearest?" running up and putting both arms around her stately friend. "You are the dearest woman alive, and the one most to be congratulated, I think. I should have been madly in love with the great god Pan myself, long ago, only that I knew it would be no use with you as a rival," and she kissed her rapturously on both cheeks.

"Let us have a share in the congratulations, too," cried Gertrude, as she and Isabel clasped arms around the others.

"But I regret to say, dears, that the matter is not entirely a subject for congratulation. Papa is very angry, and I am in straits betwixt two, like St. Paul."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" said Gertrude. "That must spoil all your pleasure."

"I would not let it spoil all my pleasure," exclaimed Lucile, in her usual impulsive way. "Have children no rights which parents are bound to respect?"

"Or *vice versa?*" said Elinor.

"Well, parents have no right to interfere with 'the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves;' of that I am perfectly convinced. They have not got to live seventy-five or a hundred years with a man. That is what appals me. I think I shall live single, since that thought struck me."

"The longer the better, I should think, if you were happy," said Isabel.

"Well, I don't know; these magnificent distances haven't much attraction for me. I never sympathized with the young man who had no taste for the finite, but thought the infinite was the thing for him. And the verse running—

> 'When we've been there ten thousand years,
> Bright-shining as the sun,
> We've no less days to sing God's praise
> Than when we first begun'—

cured me of my taste for heaven. I have never had any longings that way since I learned it. It is rather overdoing the thing to my mind. A billion of years, more or less, I might aspire to, but to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow to the last syllable of recorded time, and that only a kind of prelude—oh!" and she drew a long breath and sank upon a chair.

"Never mind, dear," said Isabel, "there is a new theory coming into vogue—that a part of the contingent of souls will be annihilated. You may come in under that head."

"Yes; I believe it is the hopelessly bad portion. I may stand a chance, and I rather think I should prefer it that way."

"Pray tell me, Isabel, what you would do in my situation?" said Elinor, gravely.

"I think I would wait awhile for my father to become reconciled to the idea, and try and have him convinced of the worthiness of my lover, and, if he still remained obdurate for no good reason, I should consult my own happiness. That I believe to be every woman's right."

"But it would be a great grief to you?"

"Yes; it would be a real sorrow; but I should not feel that I had the right to render the man who loved me unhappy to save myself a possible pang."

"But are not parents' objections, as a rule, apt to be well-founded?" said Gertrude.

"Yes; I think as a rule they are, but there are exceptions, and I think this case is one of them. Where the only objection is a fancied inferiority in social position, I should not feel bound to regard it. I think in this case it is ignorance of the real man. If Mr. Lewis could be persuaded to know Herr Hardige, I am sure he would withdraw his objection."

"Of that I am fully convinced," said Elinor; "and, if he based his objections upon moral character, I should feel bound to regard them at all hazards. Parents are wiser than their children in regard to the character of men, and I should not dare to marry a man my father deemed unfit; but merely that a man teaches music, rather than practices law or engages in trade, I cannot feel to be an atrocious crime."

"Just wait a little and the skies will clear, I am sure," said Gertrude.

"Just at present there is heavenly music down below," said Lucile. "Let us seek it, and leave the enigmas of life for a later consideration," and she fluttered down stairs.

"In the meantime," said Isabel, "you must be divinely happy here, where all are so kind and full of sympathy, and Herr Hardige so radiantly happy. It makes me smile just to look at him. He irradiates joy, and we all come in for a share."

"And I believe I am just as happy as he, spite of my perplexities. Somehow they cannot affect me as I should have thought: other feelings seem to overflow them, and I lose all trace of them for a time."

"I am so glad you were true to yourself, Elinor."

"You may well be. If I had allowed my pride to rule, I should have been the most unhappy of women, and I should not have been a good woman, but one hard and cynical and unnatural."

> 'I am named and known by that moment's feat:
> There took my station and degree;
> So grew my own small life complete,
> As nature obtained her best of me—
> One born to love you, sweet.'"

She quoted this with a laugh, and yet there were tears in her eyes, and the verse seemed true to her inmost thought.

Mr. Ray had gone to the city this morning in response to a telegram, and, as it was Friday, would not return until Monday, which all united in regretting.

"What was the call?" inquired Gertrude. "Is anybody dead?"

"No; somebody is living who had better be dead," said Frank. "The father of one of his poor families has come home drunk and murdered his wife, or attempted it—for she is still living—and there are five children to be cared for."

"Poor thing; how I hope she will die," said Lucile.

"And leave the poor children all alone?" said Gertrude.

"Oh, I was not thinking of them, but her poor soul. I just love to hear that such a person has got through. It may be very wicked, but I can't help it. And what could she do with her five children? They will be better cared for if she dies, probably."

"That depends upon what kind of a woman she is," said Isabel. "If she is a good woman, with some strength of character, no matter how poor they are, her loss can never be made up to the children; but if she is vicious like her husband, of course even strangers will do better for the little things."

"But strangers are pretty hard-hearted to such children, as a rule," said Frank; "and if they go to institutions for any length of time, it spoils them for real life, even if they are well treated there, which often is not the case."

"Oh, these dreadful institutions!" said Herr Hardige; "you can't watch them closely enough to keep abuses out; and, when they are badly managed, they are the veriest hells."

"Just think of the insane asylum business," said Lucile. "I shall love Mr. Ray forever for that bit of work."

"But it will have to be done over in a little while," the professor observed. "The politicians will manage to get the new officers out, and some tools of their own in, and then another great uprising of public sentiment will be needed."

"That politicians should be able to meddle with those institutions is one of the greatest evils of the time," said Frank. "In Chicago it is simply maddening to see how the thing works. If I ever go on a crusade, it will be one for the reformation of public institutions."

"Can't we do something for these children ourselves?" said Gertrude.

"No doubt," said Frank. "We will try when we find out what is best from Mr. Ray."

"Oh, can't we send them to the country?" said Lucile. "Just think of our boys—how happy and how good they are there."

"But such homes as theirs are not common, even in the country; yet good ones can be found with care, and it is really the only hopeful thing to do."

"And how many childless homes there are everywhere," said Elinor, "that would be made happier by these same little helpless things."

"Just think of my uncle," said Lucile; "he says life has acquired new value to him, and to my aunt, since the children went there."

"Well, we will adopt this brood ourselves, as a party," said the professor, "and see that they have good homes somewhere. The man himself is a sadder subject for contemplation. He may have been a good man when sober, although he has done this fearful deed."

"Oh, I can't bear to think of him," cried Lucile, weeping, "and it will do no good. Pray, let us have some more music and forget it."

"We may as well. The subject is as immeasurable as the evil itself, and we will run away from its contemplation, like the rest of the world," said Herr Hardige, moving toward the piano; "but the evil is not so hopeless that we are relieved of our responsibility to try to remedy it by the spread of light and knowledge. Education, education, and forever education, must be our watchword."

When the music was over they all sought the lawn, and Mr. Stanley begged Gertrude to come out in the skiff; so she ran in for a wrap, and was soon off, with all the rest on the beach to idly watch them row away.

"I think that looks a little partial," said Lucile to Frank, as they walked back, "why didn't he ask me? He knows I dote on that little craft, and this perfect morning, too! I feel injured."

"If it will console you any I will take you out this evening," said Frank, "the moonlight will be even pleasanter than the morning."

"Yes, that will be delightful, but can we desert the crowd?"

"Oh, the crowd can take care of itself. It is one of the guaranteed rights of this party, that each shall do as he pleases without reference to anybody else."

"They seem to be availing themselves of the privilege," as Herr Hardige and Elinor strolled down the beach in one direction, and Isabel climbed up to her ledge of rock in the other.

"I might give you a first lesson on horseback this morning, if your spirits are good."

"Never better. I think I can ride the most spirited steed without lessons. But I would rather fly. I would like a trip to Orion or Aldebaran, or whatever star is most inaccessible, this morning."

"Well, put on your habit, and we'll canter at least, if we can't fly."

Lunch time brought them all together once more, each enthusiastic over his or her morning—Isabel not the least so, in spite of her solitude. "I could spend a whole summer in that perch and never once tire of it," she declared. "I shall want to move on the lake shore, when I go back to town. I never knew before how infinitely changeful the water is, and how you never see the same thing twice. I only wish I could look into its depths also. What beauties there must be, down deep."

"Not like the ocean," said Herr Hardige, "you couldn't play hide and seek 'on the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,

whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea,' here, as you could in the dear old Atlantic; and there are no coral coves and branching jaspers, or 'turkis and agate and almondine,' here."

"But the purple twilights under the sea would be just as enchanting," cried Lucile, "and no doubt the mermen would 'pelt us with starry spangles and shells,' just as well here as in the ocean. And we might see a mermaid herself 'lean out from the hollow spheres of the sea.'"

"Yes," said Stanley, "if you've the right kind of eyes, you can see them here, as well as anywhere. It's all in having the seeing eye. There are certainly wonderful weeds and mosses here—the water was so clear this morning we could see them many feet below."

"What a pity all people who live in the country do not have the seeing eye," said Gertrude, "how much richer their lives would be."

"But many of them live amid the most marvellous beauty, and take no note of it. The whole magnificence of the autumn is lost on some of them."

"If only the children could be taught to observe the glories all about them, what an inheritance of joy it would be to them," said Elinor, "and how many of them are so poor in resources of enjoyment."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Stanley, "it is a great thing to lead a child's mind out in that direction. Lofty admiration is one of the most exalted sentiments of the human soul. And the pleasure coming from it is one which can never be lost, once it is acquired. If a person who loves the natural world is only spared his eyes, there is no misfortune which can make him quite miserable."

"Only to be shut away from it all in horrible city streets," said Lucile.

"You can scarcely shut him away entirely," he answered, "even there; almost everyone can have a glimpse of the sky, and he who has that, has much. The sky grows upon me year by year. I think, on the whole, it is our rarest possession."

"And the sea is like unto it," said Isabel.

"And the mountains rise a tone higher," said Elinor.

"And the flowers are much nearer and dearer," said Gertrude.

"And the dear, dear woods best of all," cried Lucile.

"Will not this afternoon be our best time for 'Hamlet'?" said Frank, "it will be rather warm for active life."

"But Mr. Ray," said Lucile, "he will be disappointed, and the play will be incomplete without him, I'm sure."

"Yes, we ought to have Ray, certainly; well, we can try 'Faust' then. Herr Hardige has promised to explain and illustrate."

"That will be a treat, indeed," said Mr. Stanley. "Let us have 'Faust,' by all means."

"We will read the first part, if you like," said the professor. "I'm afraid to undertake the second, even with a class as well prepared as you are. The present romantic worship of Goethe in this country is a great satisfaction to his countrymen, particularly to me, who have so often felt outraged at the irreverence of the great Irving, as you call him, who has torn 'Faust' into pitiful tatters, and has transformed a grand tragedy into a spectacular show. As well might he butcher Shakespeare by introducing 'Hamlet' in the skirts of a ball dress, dancing a hornpipe on his father's grave; or 'Ophelia' challenging the admiration of an appreciative audience by her unequalled feats upon the flying trapeze."

"You are severe," said Frank.

"Well, I have no patience with an American audience, that can be charmed with this sort of sacrilegious blasphemy. 'Faust,' the most complete digest of human wisdom, the very Bible of empiric as well as of speculative philosophy, amended and corrected by a greedy play-actor, and presented to an audience of the nineteenth century, in the garish light and with the tinsel decorations of the 'Black Crook', is a sad testimonial to the intelligence and taste of our times. I can imagine 'Mephisto's' scorn and contempt as he steps upon the scene to delight the public with an extra Irvinian twist of his tail."

"I take it you do not like Irving's 'Faust,'" laughed Mr. Stanley, "but I am sure you like Goethe's 'Faust'—even the schoolgirls cry for that, now, you know."

"Yes, it is quite a craze at present, I believe. I am pleased with it, but the dear ladies who form clubs to read it know as a rule about as much about it as they would if they read it in Greek. And some of their would-be teachers know even less than they."

"We should have Sunday-schools to teach it, as they do the Bible," said Lucile, sarcastically.

"You might do worse, Miss Lucile. I will not say 'Faust' alone, perhaps, but the wisdom of Goethe, sifted from the chaff by competent hands."

"There's an intolerable deal of sack to a ha'penny worth of bread, to my mind," cried Lucile, irreverently.

"Heresy," cried Frank.

"Flat blasphemy," said the professor, with a laugh, "but my little friend here doesn't quite know what she is talking about. She got tired of the wanderings and meanderings of Meister, as most people do who do not know the

Fatherland, and she was very much shocked at the immorality of the Affinities, as was natural, and that's about all she knows about the matter."

"You've made a shrewd guess," she replied, "and if you will read 'Faust,' I am sure I shall know a great deal more when you get through, and doubtless like it better."

And the book was brought and the reading, which lasted all the afternoon, began.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Go thou forth;
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm."

—All's Well That Ends Well.

EVENING came on rarely beautiful, and the sunset was of superlative magnificence. All the western heavens were piled with fantastic clouds, through which the light shone with bewildering splendor, and white smoke wreaths of feathery lightness flecked the upper heaven, while solid bars of gold lay across the eastern horizon. All were out enjoying it when Frank and Lucile started for the boat-house.

"Our turn now," they cried. "Shall we see you in the morning? Perhaps we shall be hungry by that time. That will be the only thing that will bring us in."

"*Bon voyage!* See a mermaid if you can. Lucile has a taste for mermaids."

Frank had been laboring under a kind of suppressed excitement all day, as Lucile had observed, particularly since she had promised to row with him this evening; and she rather dreaded the interview, which she felt would be fraught with fate. Frank had refrained from any allusion to his love for a long time now, and she knew that when he spoke again all must be decided. She began talking now, gaily, almost incoherently, in her excitement, for, to her own surprise, she was much excited. She was usually so at ease with Frank that she was vexed at herself for

being so moved at the prospect of a tete-a-tete with him, and tried hard to recover her composure, but in vain. Frank smilingly allowed her to chatter at random, of all things grave and gay, for a time, answering her lightly, but rather absently, until, finding him just as usual, her fears were allayed, and she subsided into silence, tossing the water with her hand over the side of the boat. She was wrapped in a fleecy white shawl, which enveloped her like a cloud, and Frank thought he had never seen her so beautiful as to-night.

For years he remembered the blue dress she wore, clinging about her so softly, the open-meshed shawl, and the great bunch of roses at her belt—an adornment she had never been without all these enchanted June days; remembered the white arm gleaming as her sleeve fell back, and the hand drawn through the water, leaving a wake of crisping ripples behind. He remembered the droop of the luminous gray eyes, made soft by "vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm to one who travels quickly," the soft curves of the cheek turned toward him, and the idle blowing of the little curls about her forehead. He remembered it long, because, as he looked upon it, he felt that he should never look upon it just the same way again. It would either be as far away hereafter as the dimmest star was far away, or it would be nearer far, and dearer, than ever before.

He almost dreaded, now that he had the chance, to stake all upon the throw. And so they glided on in silence for a long time, listening to the rhythm of the oars, and gazing at the long line of foam which lay behind. Once in awhile she would glance timidly at him, and note how grave, yet rapt, his face was, and then sweep the waters again with her eyes. At last he broke the long silence:

"I have very great news to tell you to-night."

"You take your time about it, I think. If I had known you had any news, I would not have waited so long for you to speak. Whom does it concern?"

"All of us, but mostly Gertrude and Stanley. Can you guess?"

"She loves him. I have known that for some time. Was it news to you?"

"Yes; it was news to me. I have been so taken up with my own affairs that I was not observant."

"And what will come of it?"

"They will be married. He says he has loved her from the first."

"How beautiful to have it fall out so; and what a perfect marriage it will be."

"Yes; they will be perfectly mated, I think. And you, Lucile—you do not regret him?" he faltered, scarcely able to articulate the words.

"I regret him? No, Frank, my romance about a soldier lover died the first evening I met him. He is as different from the man I could love, as light is from darkness."

She spoke in a low voice, quite simply, and without any emotion. He drew his breath in almost convulsively as he answered: "And me, Lucile; tell me how you regard me, now, for the last time?"

"Oh, Frank, I have loved you all the time, but did not know it. I thought that love must mean something new, and strange, and wonderful, such as I should feel when I saw this romantic stranger."

"You will never know how unhappy I have been. I have hardly been able to endure the suspense since Mr. Stanley came."

"I wish I had told you the first night. I wanted to, when I went with you to fasten the windows. I think I did come near it."

"You would have saved me a world of pain."

"But I have been telling you as plainly as I could ever since, but you would not understand."

"You did give me a little hope, I confess, but I did not dare to believe you. I was bound to face the worst possibility."

Then they rowed in over a shimmering sea of light, while the soft air smelt of the coming summer, and the summer in their souls was not a promise, but had come. As they reached the bank, from out the woods came voices of the well-contented doves, moving softly in their nests; the waves lapped softly on the solitary shore, and the sound of the little brook falling through the cloven ravine, all seemed notes in the new melody of the night—a melody that should deepen for them from that time forth, and grow ever more beautiful as the years went by.

They found that the others were all out in the boat; so they went in to tell Mrs. Dana, whom Frank knew to be eager to learn the outcome of his venture, which he had told her he should make when she told him the news of Gertrude's engagement in the morning. She was very happy in their joy, with that subdued happiness which mothers feel when they know their children's gain must be their own permanent loss; for mothers lose much when their children marry—much of love and companionship, and caressing care—and gain many new fears, and anxieties, and deep-seated heartaches. But the voice that bids them go is usually unselfishly cheerful, and the thought that the flown birds are happier so is a marvellous consolation for the pain.

Next day the great news was told, and even Gertrude's secret was given wings, and great were the rejoicings of all the friends.

The surprise was not as great as Lucile had expected. "Oh, I knew it all the time," Herr Hardige affirmed. "There was never a plainer case. How could Frank have been deceived so long?"

"And I have thought it would be so for a long time, too," said Elinor.

"And I thought what ought to be, would be," said Isabel; "and I am sure this matter must have been decreed from before the foundation of the earth."

On Monday Mr. Ray's return was greeted with acclamations. He looked weary and worried, a very unusual thing with him, and threw himself on the grass after the first greetings, saying: "I wish I could lie here all summer. Don't let them drag me away again: hide me somewhere."

"You've had a hard experience?"

"The hardest of my life. It was the cruelest blow that was ever struck that deprived those five little children of a good mother."

"Then she is dead?"

"Yes; she died Saturday night in awful agony of mind about her children, as well as in fearful bodily torture. It was simply maddening to see her."

"And her husband?"

"He was allowed to see her after he had grown sober, and his suffering was indescribable."

"Had you known much of the family before?"

"I had the older children in the mission school, and the mother had come to church of late. The man I had been looking after, and trying to induce to give up drink. A month ago I gave him the pledge for a year. He meant it, too, but his brain was too much inflamed with alcohol for him to be able to

keep it, passing all those open saloons every day, as he must. The mere odor from the open doors was a menace. He made a big fight, he assures me, and I don't doubt it, but he failed. He was completely crazed with the stuff after his abstinence, and this tragedy is the result."

"What will become of him now?"

"I think he will lose his mind entirely. Yesterday he was wild and excited, and filled with a supernatural horror over his deed."

"And the children?"

"They are taken to the orphans' asylum for the present, but I have engaged to get homes for them as soon as possible."

"Well, forget it all now," said Gertrude, "and come to tea; and remember, all, that it is a forbidden theme. Let Mr. Ray forget it for to-night."

"I don't feel as if I could ever get the horror of it out of my mind. But thank you for forbidding me to talk about it—there is no use in harrowing the rest of you with it any longer."

The others kept up a gay conversation throughout the meal, but he only smiled at them absently, and kept silent. But he rallied a little after they went back to the lawn, and said to Lucile, who was fluttering about him laughing to cheer him up, "Come, sit here and tell me all you've been doing since I went away."

"Oh, we've been making cake to-day, all of us girls, and the gentlemen have been fishing."

"What a quantity of cake you must have on hand. Am I expected to help dispose of it?"

"Yes, indeed. It is for the picnic to-morrow."

"Am I invited?"

"Why, yes, you are expected to take a leading part. It is a family picnic, and we are going five miles away to have it."

"The ride is for the purpose of getting an appetite for the cake, I suppose."

"Oh, we are not to dine on cake alone, you needn't think. We've made a lot of other nice things."

"Amateur cooking; isn't that considered dangerous, Miss Logan?" and he turned with a smile to Isabel, who stood near.

"Very. But you gentlemen are to fish to-morrow, in this wonderful stream—and all men think they know how to cook fish. We're going to let you try."

"And you'll eat our fish, if we'll eat your cake. That will be a fair bargain. Let us climb our crag for the sunset, please. I can talk a little to you, but I'm not equal to the company, to-night."

And without waiting for a reply, he led the way down the bank. He helped her to climb the rocks up to their eyrie over the water, then seated himself quite close to her, saying, "The sermon is not finished yet. Poor Hetty's problem has been crowded out by quite another. Which is the sadder of the two I can't determine. This life seems very full of hard problems to-night. I can't get away from the thought of evil, somehow, since this last experience—can't even 'trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill;' at least I can't rest in that trust as I usually do. It seems somehow, to-night, that the worm may be cloven in vain—and the moth shriveled in a fruitless fire."

"This is but a passing mood, I am sure; you are overdone, and a little morbid for that reason. All the world will seem good to you again, to-morrow. Don't tug away at that old problem of evil any more just now. Send it to the realms of the great unknowable, where it belongs."

"I've tried. But I can't get over the idea that somehow I've got to have a hand in the running of this universe. It all comes of my egotism; I think I'm wiser than God, and I want Him to do things my way."

"What, for instance?"

"Oh, I want Him to do away with all this innocent suffering. I don't want the sins of this father visited on the heads of these children, as they will be. I'm thoroughly unreconciled to it, and I can't preach next Sunday and say that I want the Lord's will to be done, for I'm afraid I don't."

"I believe you forget the verse we were going to quote in the sermon."

"Pray give it to me. I can't recall a thing to-night that is cheerful and courageous."

> "There shall never be one lost good; what was shall live as before;
> The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
> What was good, shall be good, with for evil so much good more;
> On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round."

"The poets know. They always keep at high tide; especially Browning. No doubt we shall all know, too, 'when eternity affirms the conception of an hour,' as he says further on." He spoke slowly and his eyes were clouded with tears.

After a little while he said, "You would help me in these dark places, Isabel, dearest, if I might always have you with me. You cannot know, you would not believe, how I have longed for you these past three days. I needed you in every way, and I shall always need you. If you could only bear to come to me. But I fear you cannot love me as I have learned to love you, and that you would find my life too hard a one, to be chosen freely."

He put his arm about her and looked wistfully into the eyes that were overflowing with tears, as he spoke.

"Tell me if it will be too hard," he added, "tell me if you can love me enough to make it easy?"

"I love you, and I have no wish for an easy life," she answered, "I will share whatever work you find to do."

"Oh, how I wish I had dared to ask you sooner. I could not believe you cared for me, you were always so calm and cool, and kept me at such a very proper distance," he added, recovering his usual tone, and laughing lightly. "You won't be able to keep me at arms-length any longer," drawing her close to him, "and I shall take revenge for the past, also, you pillar of ice."

Out on the lake they heard the voices of the others just then, singing gaily, Lucile's clear notes rising above the others, and he said, "They, too, are happy. The world all seems to be happy again, now. It may be very selfish of me, but I am suddenly the happiest one of all."

THE END.

Alta Mae Ritter